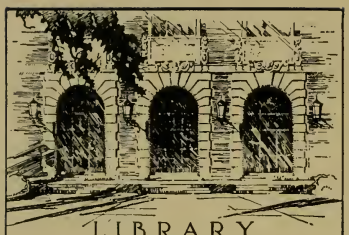

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THE

MAMELUKES:

A ROMANCE OF LIFE IN GRAND CAIRO.

BY

A. A. PATON,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF THE ADRIATIC;" "SERVIA, THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY;" AND "THE MODERN SYRIANS."

"What we greedily seek for in poems, travels, romances, is the picture of a state of society unlike the regularity of our own."—GUIZOT.

"The guests assembled from different quarters, and following different professions, formed in language, manners, and sentiments, a curious contrast to each other, not indifferent to those who desired to possess a knowledge of mankind in its varieties."—*Rob Roy.*

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THE MAMELUKES:

A ROMANCE OF LIFE IN GRAND CAIRO.

CHAPTER I.

KHALED ENLISTS HIMSELF.

The result of Khaled's inquiries in the Frank quarter among some of those Christian Arabs and Europeans in name, but Arabs by language and education, who form a sort of link between the native society and the European Consuls in the Levant, was, that not only had Moro been for some time in Cairo, but that Melusina was staying with him, and lived very retired; mixing little with the Frank society in Cairo, but on intimate terms with

the young wife of Nasif Bey, who had been two years before wife of a cadi of Aleppo, in which city they had been previously acquainted; and that a rumour existed in the Frank quarter of some courtship by a native having been the motive of her removal to Cairo: he, therefore, at once gave up the idea of returning to Syria. And as the attempt to get access through the Frank quarter would be inserting the thick end of the wedge, it struck him that the best expedient he could adopt would be to seek military service with Nasif Bey, which would give him a better chance of opening intelligence with her.

It was the same Nasif Bey whose encampment he had seen on the day of his first entrance into Cairo, near the khan of the Emir Yezbek, and learning that he frequently exercised his Mamelukes on the same spot, for which the ground was peculiarly favourable, he proceeded thither, and at the same hour, in the same place, saw a scene of exercise similar to that which had first attracted his attention on the occasion of his unlucky adventure with the Dervish.

Just under a small hillock, in the desert, was placed a stone above another, surmounted by an earthen jar, and a young cavalier, examining his pistols to see if they were in order, prepared for a course; and the other cavaliers making way for him, but allowing a clear view for the inmates of a tent pitched here — he stuck the pointed spur-stirrups into the flank of his horse, and darting forward, fired the pistol at the jar; and throwing it over his shoulder, while a cord attached to its butt prevented it from falling on the ground; he then discharged another pistol at the same mark, but both, without taking effect, lodged in the sand-hill behind.

"What are you dreaming of, Ali?" said the grandee in the tent, impatiently. "So many chances you have had, and not one hit; I see what matters will turn to—this new generation will fall off, and become good for nothing. If the Emir Yahia arrives and sees such exercises as these, he will think I have got a set of Copts or Jews for my Mamelukes. Open your eyes, my lads, and he who cracks the jar will get

the mace to crack the crown of his enemies and mine. Take down the mace," said he, to a servant who stood at the tent door, with hands respectfully crossed, and covered with his sleeves ; on which the man who led the charger of Hassan Bey, advanced and detached from the saddle-bow a small mace which hung there, and handing it into the tent, it was examined by the two officers seated there. It was about a foot in length, made of brass, terminating in a round ball, and the handle curiously enamelled with waving steel and silver, and although properly belonging to the warfare of the middle ages, when a blow with it alighting on the strongest helmet, would fell the wearer to the earth, they were, nevertheless, used through all the eighteenth century by the Mamelukes, more by tradition than by conviction of their utility.

The young men took their turn again, and Ali was again unsuccessful, while another, called Abdy, in passing, put his bullet through the narrow base of the jar, so that it fell down, and was broken in pieces. Nasif Bey, the

grandee in the tent, called the youth and gave him the mace, which he received, kissing the hand of his master. Meanwhile, Ali, who had dismounted, and stood at some distance, showed, by his countenance, how much he felt the reproof of the Bey. Not speaking with his lips, but looking daggers and maces at the youth who had received the compliment of success, and who was as full of exultation, and examining the mace as curiously as a young king come to his sceptre. Nasif Bey eyed the pair attentively for a few minutes, and calling them, said to Abdy, the successful aspirant—

"Young man, it is not enough to gain, one must know how to keep; and, as for you, Ali, none of your downcast looks, but jump on your horse again, and try once more—Mohammed Anapali, do you hear?" continued he, addressing one of the footmen; "stick up another jar, and let us see how Ali comes on."

Ali then loaded his pistols, mounted his horse, and rode to the starting point. Examining his pistols carefully, and measuring with his eye the course to be run, he darted off at

the gallop, and had so well calculated the mark that the bullet shivered right through the jar.

" Now Abdy," said the Bey, " you who are his superior, try again. It is not enough to gain eminence—one must keep it."

Abdy slowly and doubtfully remounted, and put his horse in career; but some flies that had at that moment fixed on the tender part of the abdomen of the horse, having stung him to the quick, a sudden jerk to the side, scarcely perceptible to the spectator, caused the bullet of Abdy's discharged pistol to scatter the sand many yards distance from the jar ; and forthwith a cry of contempt saluted the unfortunate recipient of the mace, who much discomfited, took it from his saddle-bow, and laid it down at the foot of Nasif Bey, saying, " That he was not worthy to possess it."

" Keep the mace," said the Bey, " for what I give I never take back, and Ali will be remembered another time; and as you are both young men beginning the world, and whom I intend to enfranchise next month—remember the words of Nasif Bey, ' There are just as

many misses as hits in life; and if you miss, never lose heart, but try again,' and as for you, Abdy—remember that war and politics are strange trades. He that ceases to be doing is soon forgotten, and he that attempts to repeat a successful stroke, risks failure, and is sure to have his last break-down better remembered than his first success! So now let the Djereed exercises be proceeded with."

On this, the Bey returned to the tent, which was large and showy, and while the Djereed exercises are going on, let us make a nearer acquaintance with the Bey himself, and his friend and companion. Nasif Bey, himself an enfranchised Mameluke, was about forty years of age, and had filled some of the highest offices in Egypt —was a member of the Divan, and considered as one of the dangerous rivals of Morad Bey, then at the head of affairs in Egypt. The crimson jacket, embroidered with gold, and white petticoat of the officer beside him, showed him to be an Albanian,—Ali-Aga Arnaout, a captain of mercenaries then in Egypt.

"The Emir Yahia ought to have arrived

here from his station before now," said Nasif Bey to the captain of the Albanians, as they sat, smoking their pipes. "He wrote from Suez, that he would be in Cairo early this morning; and, unless my messenger missed him, I know not why we have no tidings of his appearance; and, if he does not arrive soon, we shall have a hot ride to Cairo, for the sun is mounting apace. Ho! Mohammed Anapali! tell one of the lads to canter to the top of yonder hillock, and await there till he sees something like the Emir Yahia's caravan, and to fire me a pistol as a signal. What strange ups and dows of fortune," continued Nasif Bey, "are we subject to! I, as one of the Mamelukes of Ali Bey, entered Mecca with him in triumph, after we defeated the men of the Shereef, and this very same Yahia, having entered into a plot to procure a sudden rising of the men of the Shereef, was discovered, and about to terminate life by his own elevation to the next tree, with a rope round his neck, when I felt my young heart moved with a sort of compassion, that troubles me very

rarely now-a-days, and reminded Ali Bey of a power he gave me to beg one life. I made good my claim, and the Emir Yahia was saved."

"And now he wishes you to save him again. Is it true that Mecca is menaced by these Wahabys?"

"Quite true. These Meccakewy are like the Egyptians during the first three years of my coming here, out of the plague, and into the famine,—out of the famine, and into the murrain of cattle. No sooner rid of us, than the Wahabys threatened to conquer all Arabia, and, having got the Nejd, would fain have the holy cities too."

"As for me," said the Arnaout, "I am no politician or theologian. I go to the mosque every Friday, and am ready to kill or be killed on Saturday. What do all these Wahabys want? I hear that they sack, murder, and burn for the interpretation of some passages of the noble Koran."

"They pretend," said Nasif Bey, "to be the reformers of Islamism; to be shocked at what

they call the corruption that has been engendered by the lax morality of a later period,—they would abolish all silks and satins, smoking of tobacco, dancing and singing; and certainly believe in their doctrines, for they fight like devils."

"Then it is no use coming among us Arnaouts to get proselytes. What! no song and no dance, no gold-embroidered jackets, no tobacco, or arrack? Down with the Wahabys, say I, and so will every Arnaout say. You saved the Emir Yahia's throat from swinging at a rope's end, but in truth, I, and every Arnaout, should feel indifferent about having a throat, if we could neither sing nor smoke a hookah when the fancy seized us."

"I hear," said Nasif Bey, "that he wishes a joint understanding between the Porte, and our Divan, to have forces sent from Egypt at the same time the Pasha of Bagdad repeats his attack on Derayeh."

"I should like to see some of that service," said Ali Aga Arnaout. "I am sure that our fellows would do their best against such a set

of fools. Come, Nasif Bey, what say you to the offer of Ali Aga Scodrali, captain of Arnaouts, who is ready to handle pistol or carbine for you, as heartily as any Azab or janizary in all Cairo, and has at his back thirty as stout fellows as ever faced lead or steel."

"Thanks, worthy Ali Aga, on you I can count—come storm, come fair weather;—but as for your trusty Arnaouts, I would not give a fig for them, if their pay is a month in arrear. No, no, Ali Aga, you are my best friend, for your heart is as white as your petticoat; but as for your friends, dependents, that is a link in the chain too much for me. To tell you the truth, the arrear in your pay at the castle is, I suspect, partly owing to your coming to see me so often; and I should not be surprised if you got notice that you and your Arnaouts were no longer wanted, solely on my account; for every man I can count upon will be made to feel, more or less, the weight of Morad Bey's antipathy; but remember, Ali Aga Arnaout, my purse and my palace are always at your service."

"Thanks, thanks, Nasif Bey; what care I?

I am a soldier, and no politician,—let my superiors tell me where fighting is to be done, and Ali Aga's pistols are always burnished, and his cartouche-box filled, and as for life or death, *kismet!* we cannot alter what is written."

A shot was now heard from the Mameluke on the sand-hill, who came up at a canter to the tent, and informed Nasif Bey that the caravan of the Emir Yahia approached; on which the Bey mounted his horse, and, attended by all his Mamelukes, set out in the direction of the caravan, and, on turning the sand-hill, the monotonous beat of small kettle-drums was heard, and a long line of camels met the troop of Mamelukes, in front of which rode Nasif Bey, on a magnificent white charger richly caparisoned.

A complete contrast to the holiday costume of the handsome white Mameluke and his troopers, were those mounted on camels. The Emir Yahia and his attendants being dusky-tinted men of the Hedjas, with desiccated countenances, scanty beards, and black expres-

sive eyes, denoting a sort of malignant hauteur, somewhat inconsistent with their thin and diminutive persons.

The Emir descended from his camel, and the Bey having dismounted simultaneously, the greeting was cordial. Having kissed each other on both cheeks, and Nasif Bey having taken the left hand of the Emir in his right, led him on foot a short way, in the direction of the khan, conversing together, the suites of the two men following slowly, and eyeing each other and their equipments, while the Bey and the Emir got over the preliminary greetings.

"And what sort of journey have you had?"

"Why not much to be pleased with," said the Emir; "a tedious passage to Suez in the teeth of the summer winds, and yesterday, a roasting ride in the south wind. But all 's well that ends well. I am now conversing with Nasif Bey."

"And how did you leave all in Mecca,—your brother Shehab-eddin?"

"Well, thank God! but his beard is now

as white as cotton wool, and except his old dizziness in the head half a dozen times in the year, nothing ails him."

"And your boy, Faris?" said Nasif Bey.

The Emir Yahia suddenly looked grave, and with a sigh said, "My son is gone to the mercy of the Most High."

Nasif Bey recoiled from the chord he had touched, and, waiting a moment, muttered a verse of the Koran, and then, briskly changing the subject, added, "And your servant-man, Bekir, is he as mad and impudent as ever?"

"That fellow is the greatest cheat in Mecca, and that is saying a great deal. I was obliged to put him away, and he now practises his tricks as a guide to pilgrims; but he comes to see me always at the festival Bairam, and although I do not believe a word he says, I get a return for the money I give him in laughing."

They soon arrived at the tent, when the Emir called for a draught of fresh water, for, said he, "Yesterday's land wind has taken all the taste out of the water in our skins;" on

which Nasif Bey called for a glass of fresh water, and the Emir was forthwith presented with a silver cup of Nile water, which, while he drank, Nasif Bey said, "Welcome to Egypt;" and when he had drunk it off, said again, "A welcome to you on your second visit."

"Nay," said the Emir Yahia, "as to my ever returning to Egypt we can say nothing on the matter."

"Why," said Nasif Bey, "you know the saying, 'That those who drink the Nile water once in their lives are sure to drink it again.'"

Pipes and coffee were then ordered, and the Emir and the Bey sat down to converse in the tent, the captain of Arnaouts going into the khan to allow them to confabulate more freely.

"But how well you look," said the Emir Yahia, "strong and healthy. You were as slender as a palm branch when you were in the Hedjas, and now strong and muscular, and grown rich and powerful, and a great man—eh, Nasif?"

"Why, as for that," said the Bey, "I am like the earth itself, around which the sun moves, never shining on more than half of it at a time. Some cause I have to be satisfied, but wealth breeds care, and power breeds hate. I am too proud to obey others, too strong to be trusted, and too weak to bend affairs to my own will, so that I have the thorns of power without the roses; and I have all the penalties of importance, and none of the sweets of obscurity."

"A truce to your complaints—these are the phantoms that success creates, and we are always repining, and there is no way of expelling imaginary evils but by real ones, which alternative I fancy you are indisposed for. The evils that have brought me to Cairo are real, palpable, and imminent. We have certain intelligence that since the failure of the Pacha of Bagdad's expedition against Derayeh, the Wahabys certainly meditate a stroke at the Holy Cities, and the forces of the Shereef and the Pacha of Djidda are not in a condition to resist them. As for assistance from Damascus,

that is impossible, on account of the distance, and of the desert—there is no way of providing for the security of the Holy Cities, but by a force from Egypt, embarking at Suez, as was the case in Ali Bey's time."

"But," said Nasif Bey, "are you not afraid of a Mameluke domination?"

"No," said the Emir, "the smaller evil must yield to the greater: these Wahabys are fanatics, who, under pretext of reforming Islamism, seek only to vent their own malignant humours and boundless ambition. They are brave and eloquent, enthusiastic and fearless of death; and as the Ottoman Empire is full of the elements of discontent, their further success might produce a mighty conflagration out of a flame that now seems so insignificant."

"Do you suppose," said Nasif Bey, "that our Beys care five parahs whether the Ottoman Empire sink or swim; and provided the Wahabys don't come into Egypt, they are tolerably indifferent as to what happens in the Hedjas. I tell you this, not from any indisposition to serve you, but to enable you to be pre-

pared for a rebuff; besides, let me tell you that I am afraid that, in spite of our friendship, you are not fortunate in having me as a lever in your operations. The power in Egypt has been for some time concentrated in the hands of Morad Bey, who manages military affairs, and Ibrahim Bey, who occupies himself with matters of internal administration. The first is my decided enemy, with whom I am on terms which politeness scarcely restrains from rupture; and the second I can scarcely call my friend. Your alighting at my house will do me the greatest honour; but whether it will forward your business is for you to consider, for I should scarcely esteem myself happy in seeing your kindness, in selecting my house as your abode in Cairo, prove an obstacle in the way of the business you have undertaken."

The Emir Yahia thought a moment, and added, "There is no escape from what is written. I will, therefore, lodge with you. I always think it best not to alter or shape myself too much to circumstances. There is no escape from what is written," continued the

Emir, with whom Islamism was a religion; while with the Mameluke Bey, who had been first a baptized Georgian, and at a later period, on his becoming a Mameluke or slave, was instituted in the precepts and doctrines of Mohammed. Islamism was merely what Mr. D'Israeli the elder calls politico-religionism.

"Well, then," said Nasif Bey, "you are my guest, and the sooner we start the better, as the morning is growing warm."

To this the Emir had no objections, and the captain of Arnaouts being called for, made the acquaintance of the Emir. After a short conversation, a richly caparisoned horse was brought forward, which the Emir mounted, when the two kettle drummers, who were resting at the khan, began forthwith to beat their drums, and to start forward on the road to Cairo, preceding the Emir and the Bey, followed by all the Mamelukes.

Khaled had been all along watching at some distance for an opportunity to speak to the Bey, and just before the signal had been made that the Emir Yahia was approaching, had

mustered up courage sufficient to address Nasif, but to him the inopportune advent of the stranger made him see that there was nothing for it but to follow the *cortége* back to the house of the Bey in Cairo; and having inquired when the great man was visible, he was told to present himself after siesta, and towards evening, which Khaled did, informing Nasif Bey (in passable Turkish, which he had learned in consequence of the vicinity of Mount Cassius to Antioch), that he was desirous of entering the service of so noble a cavalier as a free mercenary. Nasif Bey laughed, and told him that he had nobody but his Mamelukes in his service; but having asked him what he could do, Khaled went through several exercises in the spacious tilt-yard, with much credit, but the details of which need not prolong a chapter already beyond the usual length; and the Bey seeing Khaled to be strong, healthy, and muscular, he turned to the Albanian officer, who sat beside him, and said privately, "Ahmed Aga, we need at the present time all the smart fellows we can lay hands on. I do not care

about having near me people I don't know, but this seems a bold rider, and a good marksman. Can you take him to your encampment at Rodah for a few weeks, and tell me how you like him ?"

"Good," said the Albanian, laughing, "but if I liked him I should like to keep him to myself—however," added he, "perhaps he would not like to come among us wild Arnaouts." He then added aloud, "What is your name, young man ?"

"Khaled," answered the young Syrian.

"*Hie, hie*—Khaled we are going to make an Albanian of you, so you may go with me to Rodah, where you will at first have small pay, but the pleasantest quarters about Cairo ; and if you turn out well you shall have no difficulty in making your way with Nasif Bey."

Khaled overjoyed at whatever indirectly brought him into relation with Nasif Bey, whose wife was the friend of Melusina, replied at once, "That he should serve with fidelity ;" and being thus accepted on the footing of a mercenary bound for the period of his service,

but free for the future; he went that evening with the Aga to Rodah, and having parted with his Syrian clothes it would scarcely have been possible for Abd-el-Aziz himself to recognise him in the short jacket and ample kilt of the Albanian costume.

CHAPTER II.

THE CASTLE OF CAIRO.

Before we introduce the reader to the Mameluke rulers of Egypt, who governed this country at the period of our true and authentic history, it may not be improper to take a rapid retrospect of their predecessors,—for, ever since the Moslem conquest, each dynasty, or set of rulers, has recorded its existence by a set of monuments, differing from what followed and preceded, although all comprisable under the generic term Saracenic. I say nothing of either Egyptian or classical antiquity, nor of the cause of that marvellous revolution, which carried the Arab race from the groves of Tayf to the shores of the Atlantic, and the doctrine and discipline of Mohammed to the eastern-

most recesses of the Asiatic continent; suffice it to say, that near the point where the Nile loses the unity of its course, and forks out so as to form the Delta, Cairo has grown up out of embryos, which have been in formation ever since the seventh century; and it was not until the tenth century of the Christian era, that Cairo, properly so called, was built and extended by the Fatimite Caliphs, who set themselves up, by force of arms, as the true successors and descendants of Mohammed, and, for a couple of centuries, managed to maintain their position in spite of the Caliphs of Bagdad.

The advent of Noureddin and Saladin put an end to the pretences of this dynasty, and Cairo henceforth became the seat of the so-called Mameluke sultans of Kurdish, Turkish and ultimately of Circassian race, who were the valiant *Soldans*, with whom Crusaders met in many a bloody field, and whose struggles formed the inspiriting theme of many a lay and romance, from the height and grandeur of Tasso, to the roundelay of the obscure pro-

vincial minstrel; but as the burden of the song goes,

"They were all of them kings in their turn,"

until the Turkish emperor Selim, in the year 1517, a quarter of a century after the fall of Granada and the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain, added Egypt and Syria to the Ottoman dominions. Up to the French invasion, and the time of Mohammed Ali, Egypt acknowledged, as its nominal ruler, the Sultan of Constantinople, and had, for its real governors, and direct oppressors, the so-called Mameluke Beys, who enjoyed all influence, power, and profit, at the period of our adventures.

The seat of the government was the Castle of Cairo, situated on an abrupt eminence jutting out from the chain of mountains parallel with the Nile, and overlooking the whole city. It was built by Saladin under the superintendence of his valiant and skilful eunuch Karakoosh; for people say, that the capacity of a man is always to be suspected, if he surround himself with mediocrities, but such was not the case with Saladin. Fear of the Fatimite party, and

of his master Noureddin, was the motive which impelled Saladin to build himself a keep, and the choice of a locality was determined by the circumstance, that a piece of meat would keep only twenty-four hours in Cairo, while upon the rock it remained without taint for double that time. Massive towers fenced the castle all round the mountain side, and towards the town, whence, from the steepness of the rock, attack was impossible. Numerous casements procured for the inmates of the rooms one of the most glorious prospects which the eye ever beheld.

In a projecting kiosk, with lattices on three sides, sat Hussein Pasha, then *locum tenens* of Bekir Pasha, the nominal governor of Egypt, and representative of the Porte, who was, at the time, in bad health, and having been recommended to take a voyage up the Nile for change of air, Hussein Pasha, of one tail, was his substitute. Unlike governors of modern date, he wore a turban of Cashmere shawl cloth, of the finest texture ; his skin was smooth, his hands small and white, and the expres-

sion of his countenance that of refinement, even verging to *finesse*, as shown by the expression of his eyes, he was quite the polished Turk of the old school. Beside him sat Nasif Bey, whose eye was subject to quick changes indicating intelligence and energy, but revealing to an attentive observer every emotion of the mind, in spite of practised and disciplined efforts to conceal them by amenities of speech. The room in which they sat has since been taken down, and was called Nazhat-el-Nazareen—Delight of the beholder,—or as we should say, Belvidere, from the magnificent prospect which it presented. The countless roofs and widening sweep of the city, enlivened with the minarets, which shot up like picturesque chessmen on a board, the distant gardens, the palm-bordered Nile, the green fields, and, lastly, the Libyan desert chain, successively expanding to the eye. The room was not one for the larger description of receptions, — being of moderate size, and furnished without magnificence; a plain crimson cloth divan, with a gold fringe, and Turkey carpet, being the only

furniture, while broad double curtains veiled the door.

"Have you seen Morad Bey to-day?" said the Pasha.

"I have not," said Nasif Bey; "I was told that his divan was crowded with people, and I postponed my visit to near mid-day."

"That cannot be said of my divan," said the Pasha, "there is no crowding or jostling here. I am, therefore, the more obliged and indebted to those who show proper respect to the representative of the Porte. You have no doubt heard of my altercation with Morad Bey, in which I freely expressed my mind. My superior, Bekir Pasha, is sent here as a mere puppet, for three years, to eat, and drink, and do nothing, and to look on while all the business is transacted by Morad Bey, and Ibrahim Bey; but I think that, at least, I might be spared all insults. Morad Bey had the impudence to propose, that I should not give a public reception to the Emir Yahia, although he is on the way to Constantinople, to solicit an armed force to be sent against the Wahabys. A

turban on the top of a broomstick would be as powerful a pasha of Egypt as I am."

"A much more powerful pasha," said Nasif Bey, "for a broomstick could not say a single word of civility to the enemies of Morad Bey: he will never pardon me for my share in our last rising in the business of Mohammed Bey, or pardon you for being the agent of the Porte, and the friend of myself."

"Was ever such insatiable ambition seen? Morad Bey concentrates in his own hands all the military resources of Egypt; even those who detest him are pacific, complimentary, and obedient,—and yet, because that he suspects that the Porte may call upon the Divan of Egypt to send a force into Arabia to arrest the progress of these detestable Wahabys, he makes difficulties on the subject."

"Physical courage he certainly has," said Nasif Bey, "but he will never become an Ali Bey."

"No," said the Pasha, "there is only one man that I know of destined to make a distinguished figure in the affairs of Egypt, and

that is Nasif Bey. His large house of Mamelukes, whom he trains in all exercises, his courage in war, and his prudence and trustworthiness, mark him out as likely to be the coming great man."

A smile of undisguised satisfaction played over the features of Nasif Bey, at the thought of the vista which the Pasha was opening up to him, and with modesty he confessed that the only quality he prided himself on, was prudence and discretion.

"Which qualities," said the Pasha, "you are well known to be possessed of, at the Sublime——"

Porte, he would have added, but at that moment the curtain of the door was waved aside, and the servants entered with pipes and coffee, and as they approached, the Pasha abruptly changed the conversation to the subject of the arrival of the Emir Yahia in Cairo; but without a single motion of the body, or a muscle of the countenance, or tone of the voice to show that the previous conversation had related to a different subject, and while coffee

and pipes were served, the ears of Mahmoud-Ozetli, the cup-bearer, were actively employed in listening to every word that was said, which he duly retailed for a moderate sum, to a man in communication with the kyahia, or deputy of Morad Bey, and, like every prudent dealer, took care that the significance of the wares should be rather increased than diminished by the passage through his hands. On this occasion, however, the topics were of too commonplace a description to afford much interest, as the Pasha and the Bey confined themselves to those generalities which were the talk of the Castle of Cairo; but, no sooner had they seen the curtain again to wave behind the exit of the servants, than the *locum tenens* of Bekir Pasha, still smarting with irritation at the disrespect shown him, by the most energetic and influential of the Mameluke Beys, and anxious to produce such a division as might consolidate the power of the Porte, and elevate himself, at the same time, to a still more eminent and conspicuous position in the Ottoman Empire, resumed the conversation with Nasif Bey.

"I do not flatter you, Nasif Bey," said he, "when I tell you that I consider your chief quality to be the stability and fidelity of your attachment to your friends and party; qualities so rare in these days of treachery, when one does not know whom to trust, that really with the exception of yourself, I scarcely know a single man who, in twenty-four hours, would not sell me by auction to either Morad Bey or Ibrahim Bey, like a dirk or a pair of pistols in the Khan Halily. Let us frankly understand each other. Is your ambition satisfied with remaining as the fatted ox on the hands of the butcher—the mere rich man, with a fine house at the Birket-el-Fyl; and not only without a shadow of power, but in danger of the deadly resentment of Morad Bey? Are you disposed for any enterprise?"

"Disposed enough," said Nasif Bey, "if I saw my way clearly, but you know how matters stand. Morad Bey has all the military power —Ibrahim Bey manages all domestic and financial affairs—Bekir Pasha, with no disrespect be it spoken, is the worthy and well-wishing repre-

sentative of the Porte; but the power of the Porte is to all intents and purposes a nullity in Egypt."

"Yes. But the Porte is a system and principle which no bey or set of beys can shake; neither pecuniary means for the present, nor prospective power, will be wanting to a man who would render an essential service to the Porte at this juncture. You, Nasif Bey, are by your talents and ability, the likely person for an enterprise of this sort. How stands your disposition?"

"Point out the method, and I am ready," said Nasif Bey.

"With the methods and the execution of the matter, I cannot and must not meddle," said the Pasha; "and one thing must be clearly understood, that, if the matter fail, the failure must rest at the door of the actors; I must not appear in the affair at all; nor can I act the smallest part in the matter, except in putting you in the high road to power and profit for yourself, and the abasement of your enemies. Ponder well over the matter—if it

fail, there must be no clinging to me, or involving of me; and even in all the preliminaries you must act as from yourself, and my name never be mentioned; on no other terms can the affair be embarked in."

"*Mefhoum*—that is an understood business," said Nasif, smiling. "Do you suppose I have so little experience in affairs as not to understand that, and to practise it myself, too, in all cases where there is no necessity to appear myself?"

"Have you a man," said the Pasha, "on whom you can place as much reliance as I can place on you?"

"I have," said Nasif Bey.

"Then," said the Pasha, "our way to go to work is to place him in communication with one who will concert the fittest measures to be employed towards our end. Who is this person?"

"Ali Aga Arnaout, who is encamped in the island of Rodah," said Nasif Bey. "And who is the person with whom you propose to put him in communication?"

"A dervish—one Jalaleddin, from the convent of the Rose Garden," said the Pasha.

"I can depend on this Aga of Arnaouts," said Nasif Bey, "whom I have known for many years; but are you equally sure that the other man can be depended on? for if you are shielded by me, I do not stand in the same favourable position; for I presume that you do not communicate directly with the dervish."

"No, indeed," said the Pasha; "if I saw him I should not know him, except as a dervish by his garb; but I know well that he is a Satan, with a perfectly shrewd comprehension of affairs and knowledge of how to set others in motion. And if you, Nasif Bey, manage well, the subordinates may run the risks if you stand as clear as I do."

Nasif Bey shook his head, and said, "It is a cast of the dice. I am weary of inaction and impotence in political affairs; but as for supposing that I can escape in the case of failure, I am not so sanguine, for there are more secrets guessed at by those who are interested in divining them, than betrayed for pelf; for those

who have arrived at such eminence in political and military affairs, as to have secrets worth betraying, are like the distillers of essences, who take care not to put them into phials that evaporate."

"Well, we understand each other," said the Pasha, as Nasif Bey rose to take his leave.

"We do," said Nasif Bey, who forthwith descended to the court-yard, and mounting his horse, proceeded to his house in the Birket-el-Fyl.

CHAPTER III.

RODAH.

About a mile above Boulak and opposite Fostal, or old Cairo, as it is called, near where Amr-ebn-el-As, on the first conquest of Egypt, pitched his tents, is Rodah, a long and narrow island in the Nile, with the Nilometer at its southern extremity. The northern peak of the island, looking downwards in the direction of the Delta, is now the most delightful promenade in the environs of Cairo, from the creation of a garden, which combines the variety of an English park and landscape garden, with the peculiarly tropical vegetation of Egypt. But at the period we speak of, palms and citrons grew in luxuriant disorder, and the only appearance of art was a magnificent avenue of

sycamores, which was the favourite promenade of the British and French officers, who soon after these events left Toulon and Bombay to meet on the banks of the Nile. This island, from its position, has a coolness which contrasts with those parts remote from the river, and, therefore was a favourite encampment of the Albanian irregulars, who, before the introduction of European discipline, found employment in Egypt.

On the day after the conversation detailed in the last chapter, the sun was sinking in the west, behind the low sterile Libyan chain that rose behind the pyramids, their hitherward surfaces in deep shadow, and their sides exposed to the slanting rays of the fiery orb, rising like acute triangles of gold above the broken ground in the distance; while, in the opposite direction, the numerous minarets of Cairo overtopped the gardens and villas that bordered the river, and were themselves dominated by the fine extensive old castle, jutting out from the flanks of Mokattam, in the clear air and southern brilliancy of the colours of Egyptian landscape.

Two groves of palm trees, adjoining each other, waved over two groups of tents, within which might be seen Albanian troops, lying listlessly on their sheep-skins; and on the space between the two encampments were pitched two tents of much larger size, for the stretchers of which the spaces in the grove did not offer a sufficient room. These were the quarters of Ali Aga Arnaout, who kept Khaled, as a sort of aide-de-camp, immediately attached to his person, as his personal activity in exercises, and the ingenuous expression of his countenance, had prepossessed him favourably. Khaled waited at the door, with a group of several Albanians, armed to the teeth, while beside them were piled several of those long rifles with inlaid butts, carved in zinc, and the barrels clasped with rings, which, clumsy as they appear, when in good hands, and poised on a support, whether a rock, an enclosure, or the trunk of a tree, will bring down a man at the distance of a hundred paces, and even much more. All over the ample circle, within this large tent, were laid

Bagdad carpets, and at the further end of it sat Ali Aga, who was entertained by the coarse jokes of a buffoon, who stood at the door of the tent with a conical tin cap on his head, the tassel of which was formed by a badger's tail; the rest of his dress was that of a fool, but his countenance was certainly that of a knave.

The Deli was cracking some very poor jokes, when a dervish presented himself at the entrance of the tent, and entered saunteringly, and, saluting the Aga, was invited to sit beside him. He was a man rather below than above the middle stature, with a sallow complexion, and a glossy black beard, without a single grey hair in it, although, from the wrinkles in his face, he must have been between fifty and sixty. His manners were cool and impenetrable, but his eye unmistakably showed that, if he spoke little, he thought and observed a great deal.

"You dervishes are fond of gardens," said the Arnaout, "notwithstanding the devotion of

your lives to a religious order: what if you stayed here and supped with me?"

"I do love gardens," said the Dervish, "for what work of Allah is so beautiful? and I accept your invitation."

"Do you hear that?" said Ahmed Aga to the jester; "the Dervish is to sup with us, so prepare some of your best jokes for the occasion," which the professional joker understood to be a hint to cut short his attendance on this occasion; and the Dervish and Aga proceeded in their conversation, undisturbed by third parties.

"If I mistake not," said the Aga, "you are Jelaladdin, the Dervish."

"The same," said the Dervish.

"And you are Ahmed Aga Arnaout"

"That is my name," said the Aga.

"And a good friend of Nasif Bey, as I hear," said the Dervish.

"There is no mistake on that score," said the Arnaout; "and now, pray, let me know from whom and on whose part you come?"

"I come on my own part, and of my own accord," said the Dervish; "I have heard a great deal of Nasif Bey, and I wish to have conversations with him, both long and frequent, but cannot approach him openly, without the utmost inconvenience, on account of the parties with whom I stand in close relation. I believe, if I am not mistaken, that you can put me in the way of getting access to him."

"Willingly," said the Aga; "I have been fully prepared for your visit. You know Nasif Bey's house, in the Birket-el-Fyl; supposing that I were to put you in possession of a key for opening the small garden door in the lane at the back of it, close to the small kubbeh or cupola. At what hour would you go, so that Nasif Bey might be in waiting inside?"

"I think," said the Dervish, "that just after the Eshia would be the most convenient time for me; but would that suit Nasif Bey?"

"No doubt that it would," said the Aga; "at all events, if you will come to-morrow and sup with me, I will either furnish you with the key, or let you know when would

be the most convenient time. Of difficulty, or of inconvenience, inside, there is none; having entered the door, and shut it again, you will find yourself in the small private garden of Nasif Bey, to which no one but himself has access, and where you will find him, on turning to your right hand, in a small summer-house."

Scarce had the Aga said this, when a confused murmur of voices was heard; and Khaled and the other men at the door of the tent had scarcely time to seize piled muskets, when the front of the tent became crowded with a band of Albanians, from the neighbouring encampment of the Liap clan, a tribe who dwell on the sterile coast of the Adriatic, that prolongs itself southwards from Montenegro, who were mostly of a meagre, miserable appearance, of low stature, with an ugly, unpleasant expression, and clothes of a dirty drab colour, while a flat piece of untanned leather, turned up over the toes and laced, supplied the place of shoes.

The Aga started from his cushion, on seeing this menacing demeanour, and, laying his right

hand on his pistol, demanded what was meant by this tumultuous assemblage. On which the spokesman stood forward—a short, thick-set man, of about fifty years of age, with flat nose, wide nostrils, his mouth pouched at the corners, and his eyes having the settled unconscious ferocity of the tiger, the panther, and the cat —and spoke as follows :—

"Our comrades are discontented," said he, "with the present state of things. You promised them a dollar and a half a month, certain, and two dollars if matters went well. I and they have fought for you and bled for you. It is now three years since I returned, with the last batch, from Durazzo ; and you have all the roses, while we have all the thorns. If we help ourselves to a little tooth-hire* in the villages, you talk of discipline, and threaten us. You spend the day, when you choose, with the Beys, at the big houses, in the Birket-el-Fyl, and feast and carouse ; in

* Albanian mercenaries occasionally eat the fowls of a farm, and thereafter demand money for the wear and tear of their teeth during their unwelcome visit.

short, you have your picking of every good thing. I promised these brave fellows wool to clip in the land of Egypt, as in the good old times; but if we take the wares of a dog of a Jew, and give him what they cost him, complaint is made, and you threaten to slit our wind-bags. Live and let live, say I; either give the men the two dollars a month, or let them make it up as they can."

"Silence, you robber!" said Ahmed Aga; "what have you to complain of? If I hindered disorder in the Fayoum, do you forget that I once saved your weazand from a rope, that would make the stoutest palm creak with your heavy carcase? Hear him not, my merry men. Morad Bey has declared in his divan, in my hearing, that the first Albanian who helped himself in a bazaar, should answer with the soles of his feet for the itch of his palm. If you seek liberty, why then be off from Rodah, and go back to the hills of the Arnaouts. The men are content; I read it in their faces; you are the sole cause of the turbulence. Move but a step, and I fatten the Island of Rodah

with your brains." And on this he held his cocked pistol in the direction of the ruffian, who forthwith imitated him, in plucking a pistol from his belt; but a smart blow, dealt by Khaled with the butt end of his gun on his wrist, knocked the pistol out of his hand, and rendered him incapable of using it, for his arm fell powerless by his side, and the men who accompanied him seemed irresolute; so much had the bold and determined bearing of the Aga imposed on them; for, although Selim Aga, the ring-leader of the mutiny, told the men to seize Ahmed Aga, not one of them pulled a pistol. At this moment the other encampment of Albanians had been called upon for assistance by the Dervish, who had slipped out of the tent at the beginning of the fray; and the Aga of the other Albanians, with about a dozen of his Djegues, all came running up on the first notice of the mutiny.

"Arnaout with Arnaout, that is a bad business," said the Aga of the Djegues, a tall old man, strongly marked with small pox, and having a stoop in the shoulders; "put up your

pistols, my fine fellows, and let us talk the matter coolly over," while he took the peak of his own white mustachio and looked round, as much as to say that a grey beard must be respected.

All leaned on their guns, or put up their weapons, and felt that it was useless to press the matter in presence of the other tribe.

"Thanks to you, my friends," said Ahmed Aga; "I will cut this matter short at once. Tell me, my men, are you conspirators—do you use violence with your own free will, or are you the mere puppets of that cut-throat?"

They were silent a moment, looking at each other; at length one said, "Ahmed Aga, I will do you no injury, for your heart is in the right place. Give us the two dollars if you can; but force with you, Aga! oh, never—may every bullet aimed at you go thus," so he fired his pistol towards the Nile, but the bullet entered between the rings of a palm trunk.

"And I will never injure a hair of his head," said another; "and I—and I," said several others.

"*Hie, hie*," said Selim Aga, "you are soon

settled. Did not you all, every one of you, agree not to quit the tent until you had the two dollars a month—how soon you are caressed or frightened?"

"Halt there, friend, or you will have to count with us," said the old man; "say the word at once, is it peace or war?"

"No war with Ahmed Aga," said one of the men.

"I arrest you for mutiny," said Ahmed Aga, addressing Selim.

"No, no," said the old man, "let it be as it is; you had better discharge him, and part company."

"Well, then," said Ahmed Aga, "for your sake I let him off, and advise him after this day never to show his ugly face in this encampment again."

Selim now sullenly took his departure, and on Ahmed Aga promising to the men to take their case again under consideration, the affair ended. Ahmed Aga, on the departure of the men, having told Khaled that he was much pleased with him, and that on the morrow

he should accompany him to the house of Nasif Bey, from which they should proceed to the castle in order to see the state reception of the Emir Yahia, on this presented him with one of his suits of clothes of a very superior description to that which he wore; and, however odd this proof of favour may appear to the European reader, Khaled was delighted with it, and with the prospect his new service afforded him of something, in the chapter of accidents, procuring him within a reasonable time the means of communicating with Melusina.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICS AND LOVE.

The Emir Yahia had been indisposed the day following his arrival, in consequence of the fatigues of his journey, but at length was received with great pomp and splendour in the hall of reception at the castle, by Hussein Pasha, at which reception Nasif Bey, the Mufti of Cairo, the usual agent of the Shereef of Mecca, and a great number of other persons, including Ahmed Aga, and their attendants and followers, were present, and Khaled for the first time saw something of high life.

The Emir was a man of fifty years of age, his stature short, his body thin, and his forehead narrow. His complexion was very dark, much darker than the Egyptian; the contour

of his features was on a small scale, classical and regular; but his dark, diabolical eyes and scanty beard required only to be surmounted by a small pair of horns, to correspond with the satanic mocking grin of the father of evil himself, as represented in the strange school of a Hemling and a Memling. His dress was composed of bright yellow and orange colours, and his turban was of green silk. Such was the Emir Yahia of Mecca, of the ancient house of Yahia. For what pride of birth in Celtic chief, or Lowland laird, or High Dutch Durchlaucht, can show a genealogical tree like the Ghalibs and Yahiahs of Mecca, who trace, by indisputable documents, their lineal descent from those of the Ghalibs and Yahias, who, in the days of Mohammed, held the very same offices at the Caaba as they themselves now hold? The men of Ragman's rolls and Doomsday books must give precedence to those who carry you back to the days of the Dagoberts and Sigberts, when Rome was passing away and feudal Europe an uncreated chaos.

The servants who stood at the door were

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rough, dusky-tinted men of the Hedjas, whose complexions, when contrasted with the white Mamelukes of the Pasha, indeed looked more like horsemen than well-appointed footmen, and bore marks of having seen service, but not that of cap or trencher.

The Pasha having seated the Emir Yahia on his right hand, asked if he had a good journey.

"In the summer season," said the Emir, "the wind is always unfavourable, and in the teeth of the vessel going from Djidda to Suez; but that would be a small matter, if there were not other unprosperous gales ahead of us — storms we cannot weather without assistance — hence the cause of my visit to Egypt on my way to Constantinople."

"The Sublime Porte," said the Pasha, "is a secure haven for those who are in difficulty; ever open to those who stand in need; the secure asylum where all may refit and recommence in prosperity the voyage of life. I have heard the cause of your arrival,—what news do you bring, or what can I do for you?"

"What you have said of the Sublime Porte," said the Emir Yahia, "is most true, but the news we bring are of the worst. The malignant sect of Wahabys, who, under pretext of reforming the unique religion of the One God and his Prophet Mohammed, are engaged in destroying it, have become stronger and fiercer than ever. All the Nejd and the surrounding countries having been long since in their hands, they even threaten to become the masters of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. To resist them, the Shereef of Mecca, the Emir of Ghaleb, with all his force, is unequal, and the Caaba must become the prey of sacrilege, unless the Sultan and the brave horsemen of Egypt come to the rescue."

"The Sultan," said the Pasha, "cannot be indifferent to what passes in the Holy Cities, for he is the caliph whose ancestor, the great Selim, received from the house of Abbas, the true succession of the vicegerency of God on earth, in its length and breadth; and this war of the Wahabys is a rebellion which must be suppressed by the strong arm of superior autho-

rity. You have only to state, Emir Yahia, in what respect I can be of utility to you at the Sublime Porte."

"The Porte has shown," said the Emir Yahia, "by the expedition of Daud Pasha to Derayeh, the readiness with which it is willing to come to the assistance of the unhappy populations of Arabia, who remain in a state of sincere attachment to the ancient forms of faith, and to the temporal power of the Sultan. I am now," continued the Emir Yahia, "about to proceed to Constantinople, and solicit additional letters to strengthen and recommend our cause."

"They shall be immediately made out," added the Pasha. "Do you hear, Selim Effendi," continued he, addressing his secretary, "let this letter be made out immediately and consigned to the Emir Yahia."

The rest of the conversation was not of so interesting a character as to need further reporting, and the Emir took his leave and returned with Nasif Bey to his house; Morad Bey having excused himself, on account of real

or feigned indisposition, from receiving him, and Ahmed Aga Arnaout having to communicate with Nasif Bey, relative to the interview with the dervish, also accompanied them, followed by Khaled, to the residence of the Bey in the Birket-el-Fyl.

The aristocratic regions of Belgravia are not more different from the Barbican, than Birket-el-Fyl, or Elephant's-pond, from the crowded and busy part of Cairo. Be it known to the reader, that the Nile, previous to the age of the Crusades, flowed considerably nearer Mount Mokattam, and, as Macrisi tells us, a large vessel being wrecked in the Nile, occasioned an accumulation of sand and mud, which soon became an extensive and fertile island, and, from the name of the ship, received the appellation of the Island of the Elephant; and the waters of the Nile receding in the lapse of ages, considerably to the westward, a portion of the old channel remained unfilled up, and being gradually enveloped and surrounded by houses and gardens, became, during the inundation, a lake in the heart of Cairo, supplied

with water from the Nile by subterranean channels, and during the first six months of the Christian year, changed to a wide and pleasant dry meadow, covered with tender green herbage, while round its borders flourished palms and sycamores adjoining the palaces in the environs.

In the streets in the neighbourhood we recognize none of the features of those more bustling parts of Cairo, with which the Anglo-Indian traveller is familiar — the narrow, crowded thoroughfare, with the lattices of the first floor almost meeting each other, the open rows of shops, a few feet square, crammed full of commodities, and in which the seller has scarce elbow-room; the loaded camel jostling the ass of the water-carrier, with its distended dripping skins; the crowds of pedestrians, from the squalid beggar upwards; and the hack-asses, noisily piloted through the streets and thoroughfares, with the loud cries and gesticulations of the driver.

The environs of Elephant's Pond, on the contrary, are solitary, without being dull and

lifeless, and have a quality quite different from that of the painfully monotonous parallelograms which are the abodes of London fashion. The streets in the quarter we speak of are winding lanes, with high foliage-crowned walls, and here and there a large magnificent portal, curiously fretted with Saracenic sculpture, at which stand several domestics, showing, by their dark skins and well-conditioned appearance, whether they be black or white, as well as their good clothing, with fresh new red or yellow shoes, that they are the domestics of a large and opulent house. The passengers you meet are few in number, and often consist of a whole harem, either corpulent in person, or so enveloped in silks as to appear so, riding on their tall asses and escorted by their haughty, sulky eunuchs, while paying a visit to the family of some neighbouring grandee—the buzz of many voices is wanting; but, passing a corner, the opening chapter of the Koran is audibly recited at a small mosque or tomb, by a descendant of the celebrated saint, Sheikh-ed-Dalam, who, in the time of the Eyoubite

dynasty, was supposed to be inspired. But the nearer the church the farther from heaven. At the period we speak of, this part of the town, where very few individuals covered a large space with little thoroughfare, used to be notorious for the snatching of turbans after night-fall, by those who had not the audacity to draw attention to the quarter by a murder, or robbery of a graver description; but these turban-snatchers soon disappeared after the advent of Mohammed Ali to power, and the introduction of a more systematic police.

The house of Nasif Bey lay between two lanes, close to the Birket-el-Fyl, and consisted of two large courts and a garden beyond. In the outer court, which was spacious and had several lofty trees, were the offices of the Coptic clerks, who attended to his revenues, and of a large number of Mamelukes whom he trained to arms; and while Ahmed Aga was in consultation with Nasif Bey, Khaled was invited into one of the rooms in the outer court-yard, in which his young soldiers resided. Here was to be found none of that luxury that reigned in the interior of

the palace; the old shabby divan that ran round the room, instead of being raised from the floor, was level with it; the walls had not been washed for some time, and contained verses of poetry, by no means distinguished for good taste; in fact it was rather a sort of barrack-room, for the walls were plentifully furnished with pegs, from which depended the arms and clothes of the Mamelukes, and generally denoted to an accurate observer their individual tastes, by the better or worse order in which their armour was kept, and the accessorial addition, in one case, of books, denoting a taste for reading; in others, of more frivolous pursuits; and in one corner was an invalid, a young lad lately arrived from Circassia, wrapped up in sheep-skin cloaks, in consequence of having caught an autumnal fever during the decline of the inundation, a slight shiver betraying his discomfort, and making him wrap the sheep-skins more warmly about him; while beside him was another young man, now acclimated in Egypt, who, having finished burnishing his pistols, was admiringly hanging them up on the peg.

Khaled was politely treated by the inmates of the room, and however little sympathy he might have with the Mamelukes of Egypt, their government and their history, all that related to Nasif Bey interested him, and his innate desire for fresh information was gratified, as during the mid-day repast the oldest of the Mamelukes then present related to him some of his experiences.

But it is unnecessary to report to the European reader this conversation in detail, suffice it to say, that the corrupt courtier of the age of Louis the Fifteenth, who passed his days in frivolity and dissipation, was not so removed from his ancestor, who, at the summons of St. Louis, buckled on his armour, and with the strength of faith braved the dangers of the seas, the perils of war, and an uncongenial clime for the faith of the Cross; as the Mameluke bey, at the epoch preceding the French invasion, had degenerated from that standard of enthusiasm for the doctrine of Islamism, which in the time of Saladin drove the flower of European chivalry from the Holy Land. All religious sentiment was extinguished,

and, according to native historians and the travellers of the eighteenth century (of whom Volney is by far the best), a few fortunate sabre strokes, or a larger amount of astuteness or audacity were the high-roads to eminence; but these adventurers, although elevated to a higher sphere, were without those graces of chivalry, and those feelings of conventional honour, which never altogether quit the noblesse of Europe, for although the partners of royalty they had the souls of slaves.

The art of government was with them, neither the somewhat impracticable greatest-felicity principle of a Priestley or a Bentham, nor even the more restricted subordination of means to the ends of a governing party, as in Europe, but the grossest form of egotism, the goose killed to get at the golden egg; beautiful women, sumptuously fitted-up villas, costly jewels, hidden in their hareems in case of a reverse of fortune, splendid arms, a crowd of well-dressed servants, luxurious baths and gardens, all purchased at the price of living in a state of perpetual alarm for their own security, and in a

perpetual state of intrigue, in order to destroy rising rivals, without stopping at any means, however foul and disgraceful, but all agreed in pillaging the provinces, and using the bastinado to extract the last *nusf* from the miserable cultivator of the soil, and at the same time to elude by every chicane the sovereignty of the Porte. But to Khaled, accustomed from infancy to hear of no better system of government, either in the Pashalics of Aleppo or Tripoli, these anecdotes occasioned no surprise.

At one end of this large court-yard were a number of fine horses ready saddled, and a few of them magnificently caparisoned, and in the centre of the wide space, forming a sort of rude *manège* were two young Mamelukes, who had just returned from their exercise at the Meidan, who galloped round in the circle, with their smoking horses, and throwing up their carbines in the air, caught them again with amazing dexterity, or, laying them down on the ground, hung from the neck of their horses and picked them up as they swept round the ring; but a loud voice from the window on the shady side of the court-

yard had an instantaneous effect in making them abandon their exercise.

"Do you mean to make my horses sweat to death, you young knaves?" said Nasif Bey, who was pacing the court twirling beads in his hands, and conversing with Ahmed Aga; on which the youths forthwith dismounted, and with a thin lath scraped the perspiration from the horses' flanks and quarters, and immediately led them out into an adjoining enclosure, where they were picketed in a line with many others. Nasif Bey then went to ask for the invalid Mameluke, and said to a blear-eyed humble-looking man in a black turban, who was his Christian physician,

"How goes the fever?"

"I warrant the fever subdued after next return," said the Christian, reverentially, as he stepped out from the crowd of servants and attendants who followed the Bey at a respectful distance.

Near the door of the hareem was a couple of high saddled asses which now attracted the Bey's attention, and he said to an old eunuch lounging near, "Furrage, whose hareem asses are these?"

in a tone so as not to be heard by those who followed, but the corner of the court-yard in which Khaled stood distinctly echoed the answer of the old man, that the asses belonged to the daughter of the Venetian Consul.

A film seemed to come over Khaled's eyes as he learned that he was now within the same walls with Melusina, and forthwith the portal that led to the hareem, and the asses that waited there, seemed to him to belong not to earth, but to a world of wonder and enchantment. He felt as if riveted to the spot; but the charm was instantaneously dissolved, as he heard the voice of the Aga calling out to him that they were now to return to Rodah.

CHAPTER V.

MELUSINA AND FATIMEH.

The relations between the females of consular families and those of the wealthy Turks at the period we speak of—long before the large influx of Frank families that has since taken place—were of a more intimate and familiar character than those which took place between the males of the respective religions; for in the latter case the tug of temporal interests, frequent collisions of opinion, and the reciprocal feeling —that familiarity breeds contempt,—proved an obstacle to anything like these easy relations which existed between the females of the consular families and the hareems of wealthy natives, who had no object but to amuse and be amused. Of friendship, properly so called, there was little

or nothing in a general way, but there were visits of three or four hours in length, and a great deal of admiring of dresses and showing of jewels, and prattle to children, and sherbets and preserves, with all manner of civilities and compliments, which, however high-sounding and magniloquent, could not be called more insincere than those used in our northern academy of compliments, just as the most artistic imagery ceases to be figurative, when fused into the current coin of conversation.

But Fatimeh, the second wife of Nasif Bey, had none of those exaggerations and compliments—her head was clear; and although her temper was warm her heart was good, and she was as straightforward in her love of Nasif Bey, and in her hatred of Hanum, his first wife, as in the language she held to all her friends and acquaintances. Her relations with Melusina were on a closer footing than those usually existing between Frank and Turkish ladies; and at no period of their acquaintance were they more open and unreserved to each other than on the visit alluded to in our last chapter.

The still beautiful countenance of Fatimeh, expressive of maturity of intellect, strikingly contrasted with the almost death-like air of the love-struck Melusina,—a state of female mind rare in the frigid north, where the tornadoes and devastations of southern passion are much less frequent.

"And so poor Wurdy is dead," said Melusina ;—"when I think on the eulogies you used to pass on her,—Heaven forgive me for saying the word!—I could scarcely think it a deadly sin to plunge a dagger into the hearts of all those who have been, either directly or indirectly, concerned in so foul a transaction. It is, certainly, the most extraordinary tale that ever I heard."

"Always excepting," said Fatimeh, with a smile, "the still more singular and extraordinary tale you have told me of yourself. I for my part could not conceive the cause of the decline of your health and beauty. As for the mystery of the individual you love, I will not attempt to penetrate it. I am but slightly acquainted with your Christian customs, but ima-

gine there may be discrepancy in the match, but no impropriety. *Adjaib!* I have a latent idea, from circumstances that have vaguely dropped out, that the young man may be a Moslem;—then should I clasp you to my bosom, and say it is lawful to marry, and that the husband and wife be of our faith of Islam. Have I not found you out?"

"No, no—oh no!" said Melusina; "Moslem he is not, and Moslem I can never be; but no more of that. I have lost all hope and am prepared for the most solemn of all changes—this trial is what I cannot long survive," and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Take courage," said Fatimeh; "I have no idea of losing my friend so soon. Come, that is surely not the way to get out of difficulties. I came from Bosnia, the land of the brave and the strong!"

"And of the fair and the good!" said Melusina.

"Well," said Fatimeh, "if I had an object in view, I certainly should not begin by despairing, but should first look at it steadily, and

then all round about it—and then look at it again; and, having formed a resolution, I should act upon it."

"I doubt it not," said Melusina; "but all natures are not alike; and, to tell the truth, when I betray my pensiveness, and would fain relieve it by telling my uncle the state of my feelings, he gives me such awful looks as strike me dumb; and the very word seems to freeze on my tongue."

"Well," said Fatimeh, "I can only speak for myself in such a case; and I think, if my heart were set upon an object, I should rather die than give up my point; and what a woman seeks with all her heart and soul,—that shall she obtain."

"Oh! if I could be like you, I might succeed!" said Melusina. "Before my relations discovered my passion, I was as confident and ingenuous as my love was strong; but an unseen power seems to have subjugated me; for although my love is stronger than ever, my health has seriously suffered, and I do nothing but dream all night and weep all day."

"Do not despair; have not women power of their own?—although they have neither the arm of men nor the fangs of beasts, have they not the stronger arm of boundless love and invincible perseverance?—are we not like the soft dropping water that conquers the flintiest rock?"

"Well," said Melusina, "I own that your discourse begins to give me courage; you yourself must have conquered difficulties, or you could not hold such language. Your tale, I have always heard, is a strange and eventful one. Could you not strengthen me by a record of your own experiences?"

"If you wish it," said Fatimeh, "it is at your service, although it is not to every one that I relate what has happened to me. In difficulty, pain, and grief, I acquired submission to what is written; and let me tell you," added she, with a latent triumphant smile, which lighted up her countenance into the *beau idéal* of semi-malicious archness, "something I also acquired of the temper that contemns the

indulgence of anger, and makes our own honey, gall to those that hate us."

"I know how you are situated with Hanum," said Melusina; "but I do not wish to enter into family quarrels; it is what happened to you before you came to Aleppo, of which I heard vague accounts, that has so interested me."

"Well," said Fatimeh, "I do not say that you made me the repository of your own secret to induce me to tell my own tale; but your artless confidence invites me to recall scenes and incidents which do not happen to every young woman."

"No one can be more sensible of your kindness and confidence," said Melusina.

"Know, then," said Fatimeh, "that I am a native of Bosnia, and my father dwelt in the Castle of Sussurovitza, a wild place on the point of a rugged rock, all the surrounding mountains being covered with dark impenetrable forests to their very summits, which, even from ancient times, had been the property of our family, which was one of the most considerable in Bosnia. In winter, when the snow

lay long on the ground, all the beys, far and near, used to come and feast sumptuously, and I recollect an old hall hung with iron armour, which had covered my ancestors from head to foot; here they used to assemble and talk of the times when the faith of Islam and the power of the Porte had not penetrated to Bosnia; and of the strange dignities and offices, of the Frank sort, which their ancestors used to hold at the Court of the Kral.

"Then spring came, covering all with mists and rain, so that we scarcely saw the surrounding hills from the castle windows; and there were secret comings of men; and there were counsels and passwords and burnishing of arms; for I was so young that I sat on my father's knee, and heard him say that he would put the Pasha's head between his legs. And all day my mother would weep and tremble, but dared not breathe a fear, for my father was a proud and stern man, and burst into passions like an ignited camel-load of powder. One day she threw herself at his feet, and begged him to beware of Selim Aga, who was in his coun-

sels and confidence, and whom she suspected of betraying him to the Pasha, but he looked at her with an awful look, and told her to mind her embroidery and confectionery.

"At length summer came, the mists cleared away from the summits of the Lelovo, the garden that overhung the precipice was in bloom, and I gathered the daisies on the plot of grass within the walls, or the servants took me among the tall oaks where all was dark and beautiful, or down on the meadow by the river in the vale below; but the summer and the music of the woods brought no joy to my mother, for my father was out, and all his men up in arms against the Pasha of Travnick, for some old privilege granted by Sultan Mohammed, called the Opener. And then there were the long, anxious, sleepless nights, with barred gates and gleaming signal fires and shots from hill tops by day, and arrivals of wounded men, with low moans, pallid cheeks, and death-doomed eyes. At length my father came himself, alive and unwounded, with a remnant of his force, but bruised in spirit,

totally defeated, and hotly pursued; for, as my mother had suspected, Selim Aga was the traitor who revealed all his movements. However, the strength of the castle on its isolated rock defied the Pasha's force, who returned to Travnick without having subdued it; but, in secret, he did not forget the check he had received at our castle.

"At length my father imagined that his rising was forgotten, for he had made his submission by letter, and the Pasha invited him, after the lapse of two years, to consult on the affairs of the province. My father smiled as he read the communication, and said to my mother, 'You have often asked me to take you to Travnick to see the hareem of the vizier; your wish is fulfilled; to-morrow we start, so prepare for travelling, and our little girl shall accompany us.'

"Never shall I forget the day of our departure; my father was in high spirits, but my mother was thoughtful. The first day we slept at the house of Ahmed Stanko Begovich, a relation of our own, and next day, at noon, we

arrived at Travnick, where the wife of the vizier and family received my mother with consummate courtesy and hospitality. The bath was forthwith prepared; the numerous gilt crystal sherbet cups, on silver salvers, are still in my eye; and, in short, our entertainment was sumptuous. But when we awoke after the afternoon's sleep, the wife of the vizier was troubled, silent, and ashamed, and at length wept aloud. My mother implored her to speak. 'No,' said she, 'the vizier, my husband, has violated the rights of hospitality, and you will never hear from my lips the cause of my trouble.'

"A vague tremor seized my mother, and in a few minutes a message being delivered to her by our maid-servant, she seized her veil and rushed out to the street, in spite of the efforts of the vizier's wife to retain her. All this made a profound impression on me, although a child. The hareem of the vizier was in despair and consultation; watching an opportunity, I slipped out, unperceived, after my mother, and arriving at the market-place, saw a crowd around an object that attracted their

attention. Arrived at the spot, I saw my father, as I supposed, asleep on the ground, the black flies creeping over his pale face, his arms outstretched, and his hands in his boots; but in a moment I was horror struck, in perceiving that his head had been severed from his body, and placed at the fork between his legs, while between his shoulders was the gory headless trunk.

"My mother sat on the step of a door, and the people were endeavouring to induce her to go away, but she answered with neither tongue nor look; her stupified eyes gazing on the corpse of my father. I ran to her and seized her hand, and wept. 'Mother, mother,' said I, as I wept and sobbed on her knee, 'look on your own child;' but reason had for ever taken flight from that dwelling-place. My mother was removed by force to the house of a friend, and we there learned the cause of my father's doom.

"The Pasha had learned, through the traitor Selim Aga, that my father, in a fit of thoughtless rage, had said, he would yet make the Pasha's legs — arms to his head; and the

Pasha, a cunning and relentless man, invited him to this ambuscade. He received him in his divan with politeness, and having thereafter visited the Kiahya, the latter asked permission to go out for a moment, and he was no sooner gone than the Cavass Bashi of the Pasha entered with his men, seized my father, bound him, and decapitated him in the market-place. While this was going on, the Pasha learned for the first time that our family had alighted at his own hareem; he forthwith relented, and despatched a messenger to spare my father's life for the time being, but the executioner had struck the fatal blow, and the suspension came too late. As for Selim Aga, Bosnia became too hot for him. The news no sooner arrived at Seraievo, than an infuriated mob burnt his house to the ground, he escaping with his life over the back garden-palings, and got into Albania, by skulking through the woods. I have heard that he lived there by robbery and assassination, but what was his ultimate fate I know not.

"When I grew up, my aunt married me to

the Cadi of Travnick, who was soon after removed to Aleppo, where you knew him, and latterly to Cairo. After his death, I married Nasif Bey. No art have I exercised over him; I have grown to love him for his gracefulness, his courtesy, and his kindness; but his first wife became my enemy, although I have often implored Nasif Bey to show her more attention and give her more of his time, and thus, through my own youth and conversation, and her want of tact, which has alienated Nasif Bey, her days are embittered with jealousy, and she seems to live neither for hope nor for love, but to be avenged on me for faults of which I am innocent. In one word, she does not know how to grow old; and woe to the vain woman who does not put herself to a timely apprenticeship in this unpleasing science!"

It is not necessary to relate the observations which Melusina made on the tale of Fatimeh; and as the shades of evening closed, she took her departure for her home in the Frank quarter, and Fatimeh proceeded to prepare for the evening visit of Nasif Bey.

The hareem of Nasif Bey was fitted up with great magnificence, and formed a distinct compartment of his palace adjoining the garden. The older and wealthy wife occupied the apartment immediately opening on the garden, while those of the younger faced a court-yard. These two ladies were at drawn daggers with each other, but Nasif Bey never interfered with the recognised authority of the elder wife in her domestic arrangements, but gave most of his leisure to the younger and handsomer companion of his household.

Fatimeh had just completed her toilette, and cast a last glance at an oval hand-mirror of the classical form, when Nasif Bey entered. She rose to meet him with a smile ; her considerable remains of beauty being enhanced by the style of her dress, which was as bold and singular as effective in the harmonizing contrasts of its colours. She was clad in simple black, relieved by a dark crimson Cashmere-shawl girdle, and a crimson head-dress, and, as they sat down together on the divan, Nasif Bey threw off his heavy yellow kaouk.

"I was anxious all yesternight," said she, as sitting on the cushion at his feet she blew up a chip of aloe on his water-pipe, "for you never came to see me, and the hours rolled heavily on without any entertainment but observing the minute-hand of the watch."

"*Hie*, *hie*," said Nasif Bey, "you pretty women never think of business, and know nothing of our crosses. How happy should I be if I were like you, having nothing to think of but dress and visits—dance and song; for no sooner is one crook set straight than another comes in my way."

"What crooks?" said Fatimeh: "are you not Nasif Bey, one of the great of Egypt? You are rich and powerful—what prevents you from making yourself happy at home as any man in the world? Wars, intrigues, struggles, do they bring happiness like domestic life? Oh, Nasif Bey!—oh, Nasif Bey! is your sex so much wiser than ours that deceit and danger are requisite to existence?"

"Ah, and a fine system you have," said Nasif Bey; "if I were not active and atten-

tive to my interests, how long should I be Nasif Bey? The man of camps and counsels is like the barb in full career: he may shoot a-head or stumble and fall altogether, but cannot stand still. No: take from me the excitement of camps and counsels, wars and dangers, and you may take my life when you choose."

"Wars against the infidels are lawful," said Fatimeh; "and all their evils must be cheerfully borne, for how can the believers in Islam leave so many fair lands in the hands of the unbelievers; but Moslem with Moslem! Oh, do you, Beys, and Kashefs, and Tchorbajis, never think of the woes of the hareem in war—— of mothers and sisters, who have all the pain and anxiety, and none of the excitement?"

"Stop, stop!" said Nasif Bey; "what has put you into this extraordinary humour, not for loving, but for preaching like an Imam in the pulpit?" and he replaced his turban on his head, but this alarming symptom was removed by Fatimeh lifting the turban off his head.

"Pardon me," said she, "it was a train of reflections on what I had seen in my own family in Bosnia, and a perpetual fear for you, which I cannot dismiss from my mind; but," continued she, plucking his sleeve, "come with me into the next room, and Inshallah! we shall beguile the tedium of the hour with a song, and an air on the canoon, to drive away all hues of care and melancholy."

So, Nasif Bey followed her into the next room, which was concealed from his view by a thick curtain, which being drawn aside, showed, as we would say in European language, the *boudoir* of Fatimeh to be illuminated with thick and long lights of a red coloured wax, rising to three feet from the floor; while on a low stool was laid a round tray of flowers of the season, interspersed with lights, in the centre of which was a silver censer with benzoin, which being kindled diffused an agreeable aromatic odour through the apartment; and the Bey having seated himself on the divan, covered with crimson Aleppo satin, he was presented with a slight collation of digestible pomegra-

nate grain soup, and rose leaf preserves. Nasif Bey had supped previously, but he tasted the collation, and washing his hands with rose water, which his wife presented him, he then resigned himself to the pleasures of the pipe.

"You would coax the devil himself," said he; "but tell me the meaning of all those lights and flowers. Come, we men are somewhat ungenerous and suspicious: does it not all mean that you intend to ask me for some favour, and hope to achieve some victory over poor Hanum, who is already so jealous of my spending so much time with you?"

No sooner did Fatimeh hear this than holding the dulcimer in her hand, and about to commence an air, she looked up to the roof with an air of such pious resignation as the genius of Raffaele might have thrown into the heavenward looks of a Saint Cecilia, and then looking down to the earth again shed tears bitterly, wounded in spirit.

"Ya-Latif, what makes you so susceptible?" said Natif Bey, with quickness; "you foolish

woman. You must not take every random word in its literal acceptation. Perhaps I was both unjust and ungenerous: well, now, have we made our peace?—come, sweetest, unriddle me the riddle."

"You are a father," said Fatimeh, smiling through her tears, "and I prepared this festival unknown to any one but my own girl to announce it to you."

"Praise be to God," said Nasif, "be he glorified and exalted! Strange—nothing in the world ever moves me, and yet you shake me like a sycamore leaf in the wind. Oh, Fatimeh!"

The silence of a pleasing melancholy suspended their discourse, and cemented their affection; and when Nasif recovered his gaiety of tone, said, "Now Fatimeh, take your dulcimer again and enliven us with one of your ditties."

"And what air would you like?" said Fatimeh, resuming the dulcimer.

"Sing the slow air that the Sheikha Zahreh taught you last year, and that the musicians

played so tenderly at the marriage of Raouf Bey with the Georgian widow of Ali Canso."

"I hear and obey," said Fatimeh, kissing his hand.

The dulcimer or horizontal harp was of walnut wood, with strings of lamb's-gut, and played with two plectra fixed on the forefingers; and the instrument being tuned, she began to sing the well-known air "Akhsham geldi — Akhsham geldi," the beginning of which may be readily translated thus :—

"If at night we examine the power of the ocean,
The tremulous moonlight is scattered in spray,
But the permanent laws that decide all its motion
Were made by the moon for the sea to obey.
"Ah! nobler than power of the moon o'er the ocean,
Is the spirit that dwells in the body of clay,
And enthralling beyond every cause of emotion,
Is the magical power that resides in the ray
Of the smile of Nefeeseh on me."

CHAPTER VI.

HANUM.

But while Nasif Bey and Fatimeh are enjoying themselves, the reader may have some curiosity to learn something of Hanum, whose apartments were fitted up with greater magnificence than those of the younger wife; the roof of the principal apartment being symmetrically divided with curious carvings, and in the midst of the Mosaic floor, a fountain, producing from a number of jets a play of water, so as to form a curious pyramidal design, but which was never set a-going at this season, from the declining heat and the unpleasant turbidity of the waters. In short, this was the abode of wealth, but not of ease; for Hanum was a foot, moving from one side of the recess

to the other, while two black female slaves stood with their hands crossed, looking demure and respectful, when they could catch her eye, and giggling and pinching each other, when her back was turned.

"Ask Furrage if Nasif Bey is still with Sitt Fatimeh," said Hanum, as the two girls slapping each other, suddenly assumed the attitude of demure obedience.

"*Taib*," said the girl, and went away, but soon returned and informed her mistress that Nasif was still with Fatimeh. At length, after the lapse of an hour, a message came that Nasif Bey would be with her directly, and, forthwith, all was bustle to receive him; the best diamond pipe was prepared, and Nasif Bey entered with a sort of forced gaiety, as if he were not only in the best humour himself, but had the right to expect that everybody should be in the same dispositions towards him; and Hanum, to retain some of her influence, showed a corresponding alacrity; but these worthy people were unable to deceive each other. Hanum showed a constrained and ner-

vous effort to please, while Nasif soon fell into reveries as he smoked his pipe, which showed that his thoughts were elsewhere; brightened up the conversation with lack-meaning phrases, keeping the promise of sympathy to the ear, and breaking it to the hope, until, at last, when he thought he could with decency terminate his visit, he looked at his watch, and said he must go and finish his correspondence, and thus cut short a visit disagreeable to himself, and unsatisfactory to his wife.

No sooner was he out of the room than a noise of breakage of pottery was heard in the next room, and Hanum entering, found that the girls had, between them, broken her pot of crimson dye for the staining of her nails; so the sluice-gates of suppressed resentment being opened, Hanum took off her yellow slipper and drubbed the girls with such delight, that all the apartments resounded with their cries, on which she returned to the parlour, whither she was followed by Furrage, the chief of the eunuchs.

Furrage was a black from Darfour, whose

skin was as smooth and glossy as ebony, and as black as pitch, but his face so ugly, that a good-looking baboon, if possessed of intelligence, would have felt offended had it been likened to him. Furrage was the confidant of Hanum, and was taciturn, but observant, and reported everything to his mistress, receiving in return frequent presents from her.

"What news!" said Hanum.

"News, indeed!" said the Eunuch.

"Good or bad?" said Hanum.

"News that will bring me no *beshara*" (reward for good tidings).

"What then?" said Hanum, impatiently. "Surely I am not to shriek, or tear my hair, or fix my nails in my cheeks."

"Heaven forbid!" said the Eunuch, "instead of spoiling your face, you need to adorn yourself more than ever. Fatimeh is with child."

"Ha!" said Hanum, with a look of spite. "Are you sure?" added she, with vehemence.

"*Oos*," said the Eunuch, putting his fingers to his lips to denote silence.

"You fool," said Hanum, "do you not know that what you tell me is the same as if it were buried under the earth; the minx is stronger than ever; she has a talisman that baffles all my efforts."

"Talisman, indeed," said Furrage, "there cannot be the smallest doubt of it, and one of such power as would draw the miser from the love of his gold, the sheikh from his prayers, an Alim from his books, a drunkard from his hasheesh, and a soldier from the pursuit of an enemy after victory."

"Have you discovered that it exists?" said Hanum.

"Long ago," said the Eunuch, astutely biting his thick lip, and looking steadily at Hanum.

"And you never told me a word of its existence; there is no amount of cunning that I would not put in practice to get it. Help me, Furrage, like a good soul, and you shall have your reward, if I should get possession of the talisman, even after a considerable lapse of time."

"I have no hope on that score; for her talisman is youth and beauty, and the lapse

of time does as little to improve youth, as cunning does to improve beauty," said Furrage, grinning satirically, and indulging in a coarse wheezing laugh at Hanum's expense.

" Furrage," said Hanum, with considerable spite, " I always thought you to have some taste and intelligence in beauty, beyond your colour and condition, but I see that you have none. Fatimeh is not such a chicken; and as for her beauty," added Hanum, looking complacently at the henna on her nails, and her own *embonpoint*, " she has a pair of good eyes, but no flesh on her bones. Furrage, you are a blockhead, and never open your mouth on these matters again. I tell you, you have no taste nor intelligence; she is possessed of a talisman, and I will, without delay, consult an astrologer to combat the foul spell."

" Very good," said the Eunuch, shrugging up his shoulders.

" Which of the astrologers has the greatest reputation?" said Hanum.

" Hamood-el-Kafoury, who lives near Saidna Hussein."

" Well, then, to-morrow morning, we shall go and try our fortune. Is Nasif Bey in his divan now ?"

" No, he is gone to the kiosk in the outer garden," said the Eunuch.

" What in this dark night ?" said Hanum. " What means that ?"

" I don't know."

" But I should like to know," said Hanum.

" Take care that you do not bring both me and yourself into a scrape by your curiosity," said the Eunuch.

" So you begin to make difficulties now," said Hanum.

" No difficulties at all," said the Eunuch ; " have I not the key to go into the hareem garden at all times?"

The Eunuch now slipped into the hareem garden, and entered unseen the dark trellises that covered all the walks, whence gently raising himself up to the top of the wall, so as to look over into the other garden, he perceived Nasif Bey to be walking up and down the avenue, under him, in close conversation with

a dervish, whom he had never seen before, and as they approached, he could easily hear Nasif Bey say, " This is the preferable plan of the two, and if it be well carried out — Egypt is ours."

" Think well over both plans," said the Dervish ; " they both interest you : for if you do not destroy Morad Bey, Morad Bey will assuredly destroy you—Ahmed Aga—." Here his voice died away, and the Eunuch going back to Hanum, told her what he had heard. On which she forthwith told him to return to his post on the wall, as soon as the other eunuchs were asleep, and faithfully to report to her all that he heard, which he did on the following morning, but which we need not detail at length, as the result will come out in the course of the story.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ASTROLOGER.

Hanum having mounted her sleek black ass, with silver bridle, and high saddle covered with a carpet, which she rode stride-legs, after having made a few purchases, proceeded to the house of Hamood-el-Kafoury, the most renowned astrologer then in Cairo. One would suppose that a fortune-teller might, as in Naples or Paris, live in one of those obscure streets where he could vegetate only on the credulity of the poor. Not so in Cairo, which is a city of magic and superstition, and of firm belief in the thirty patent and hundred occult sciences, and where this magician lived in a good house, and drove a thriving trade.

Hamood-el-Kafoury, the astrologer, was about

fifty years of age, with a pale face and a scanty beard of a few hairs; his dress very showy, his upper tunic being of a bright pink cloth, his turban put up like those of the Ulema, and so far from being supposed to have any dealings with the father of all evil, he aspired to a great reputation for piety; and on a reading desk beside him was a ponderous Koran, in elephant folio. For himself, he sat on the divan with his back to the light, with a view of scrutinizing the countenance of his visitors, but, in the case of a lady, had to rest content with the sound of her voice.

No sooner was Hanum seated and served with coffee, than a little child, whose shabby dress and dirty face would have seemed to a European a strange contrast to the pink robe and diamond snuff-box of the magician, came running forward, with an impatient, mechanically-taught air, and cried out, "Give me a few fuddahs!" which being given by Hanum, the astrologer then asked her what he could do for her.

"The present," said Hanum, "bows me

down to the earth, and with my feeble knowledge and experience, I see no outlet or passage from present misery and unhappiness; and oh, if you can see into the future—unravel the thread of destiny—that I may hope and be at rest."

The astrologer then took a piece of paper, and began to write upon it a long series of signs, resembling the pothooks which a young disciple in the act of writing is in the habit of essaying, along with mysterious cabalistic dots, strokes and zigzags.

He then asked Hanum to recite the opening verse of the Koran, which she did.

"And what is your mother's name?" said the astrologer, after having inquired her own name.

"Howah" (Eve).

"Let me see," continued he, looking at his watch, "what o'clock have we? exactly, the fourth hour of the day; and then the month and year 1213—of the Flight—*Tamam*—exactly sixteen and five are twenty-one; we are getting nearer the unriddling of the riddle

now. Another astrologer would have taken a month to consider, but long practice has enabled me to know with certainty, by a mental process, just as if I saw before my eyes at this moment the whole scheme of the heavens revolving around this immovable earth; and just as you would look on a piece of embroidery, do I see with my eyes the conjunction of planets. This, aided by a firm belief in the noble Koran, is at the root of my knowledge. Your case is a very clear one," added the Astrologer, coolly taking a pinch of snuff. "You have two formidable enemies, who are the chief causes of your unhappiness."

"Two enemies!" said Hanum; "I thought I had only one."

"Indeed!" said the Astrologer; "but I know better; think again. A series of efforts have been made, by falsehood and other means, to render you hated by a person with whom you would be on the best terms;" and then the Astrologer went on for some time to run up and down the gamut of safe generalities and probabilities, for which tact and experience

had prescribed limits, so that what was under a cloud of mystical phrases, obscurely applicable to all persons having friendships and enmities, received a particular and circumstantial application from the ignorant and credulous hearer.

"You are the fountain of all knowledge," said Hanum.

"But a friend will soon appear who will assist you out of all your difficulties, the exact time of which," continued the Astrologer, pointing mysteriously to the great Koran lying open on the desk, "it is not permitted me to reveal; and as your star is in conjunction with that of the person named, your relief from all your difficulties is ultimately infallible; and in the meantime you must make some effort to exercise patience and resignation."

"You are the fountain of all wisdom," said Hanum.

"Are you acquainted with palmistry?" said Furrage the Eunuch, who accompanied Hanum.

"Fie for shame, to ask me such a question," said the Astrologer, much offended at his ignorance; "that is the low miserable imposture

of gipsies and infidels, of swindlers and of all manner of heterodox pretenders. I do all my work according to rule of science, and the true faith of Islam," concluded he, pointing to the library on the shelf above, although there is a certain passage in the Koran which is anything but flattering to astrologers; for with that compact beauty in which Mohammed had no rival, in either ancient or modern literature, he said of them—

" 'Kithabu-el-Menegeneen wu lau sadaku.' "

(Astrologers must be classified as liars, even when they speak the truth by chance.)

" Do you know the patent arts and sciences as well as the occult ones? " said the Eunuch.

" All of them," said the Astrologer, with hauteur; " they have three divisions—the useful, the polite, and the vain."

" Give me a specimen of a useful art," said Hanum.

" For instance, the art of speaking with the fingers, which was taken from us by the infidel Franks, and turned by them into a mechanism called the telegraph," said the Astrologer.

"Is cookery one of the useful arts?" said the Eunuch.

"Cookery!" said the Astrologer, with a loud laugh.

"Furrage, away with your nonsense," said Hanum; "how can you ask such a silly question?"

"And what science is so useful as cookery?" said the Eunuch.

So they both laughed at his ignorance; and Hanum said, "If you wish to have information, rather ask the Astrologer what are the polite sciences."

"The noblest of all the polite sciences," said the Astrologer, "is poetry; and the names of Hariri and Motenebby are immortal. This is the science in which the Arabs have surpassed all the world, which science itself has many subdivisions."

"Tell us all about it," said Hanum.

"There is, for instance," said the Astrologer, "rhyming prose, invented by Arab-el-Araby, who attained such facility in it, in consequence of exercising it on all occasions, that at last

he could speak in no other way; and going in a strange country to a butcher's shop, to buy a fritter of liver (for he was very poor), the butcher thought him to be a Jinn or Afreet, and gave him the best joint in his stall, positively refusing to receive a fuddah in payment."

"There is for you, Furrage," said Hanum; "could you ever come to do that?"

"I can do everything," said Furrage, "which I have been accustomed to from my infancy, and therefore can eat both meat and vegetables; but how can I tell if I can write poetry or rhyming prose when I never tried?"

"Then," said the poetical Astrologer, "there is the Fenn-el-Dubayt, which came from Persia, and is the art of making poetry with only one rhyme,—thus,—

"My cash is done, decide most noble judge;—
'Tis noon, quoth Cadi, and high time to trudge.
My case is clear, from court I will not budge;—
Your case, quoth Cadi, is the merest fudge.
The weightier reasons weigh with every judge;
But, notwithstanding such an artful nudge,
To give more money did the suitor grudge,
And when decision came—his case was fudge."

"That may be a Persian fashion of poetry," said the Eunuch, "but it is an Egyptian fashion of justice."

"Then," said the poetical Astrologer, "there is the Fenn-Moual, which was invented by the female slave of Giafar, the Barmecide, who, in defiance of the injunction of the Caliph Haroun-el-Reshid not to make an elegy on the death of Giafar, nevertheless touched the hearts of all Bagdad in an entirely new measure, which was so ingeniously constructed, as to be without the pale of the caliph's prohibition."

"Oh, beautiful!" said Hanum, as he repeated it, gazing with female admiration and delight on the literary idol of the moment; "you are the fountain of all wisdom and poetry, my heart is dilated, and I think I could listen to you for ever."

"How can poets be of any account?" said the Eunuch, dryly; "I never heard that poets were otherwise than ridiculous. And as for the reciters of poetry," continued the sceptical Furrage, who was profoundly mortified at the contemptuous demeanour of the Astrologer

to him;—"are they not attendants on cafés, scrubbers of baths, or anything disrespectable. Were the great men of the earth poets? No such thing," continued the Eunuch, clapping his hand to his sword, and making it jingle on the ground, as if he congratulated himself on his lot being cast in the handling of the sword instead of the pen. "Who was Alexander the Great?—the hero with the two horns,—was he a poet?—No such thing. Who was Saladin-Joseph-the-son-of-Job? a poet?—far from it; a warrior, to be sure: and Sultan Bibars? and his seven Fedawey?—all warriors."

"Sung by whom?" said the Astrologer, "and made known by whom?"

"By poets and men of books," said Hanum. "Furrage, you fool, go and get my ass ready, for it is time to go back to Birket-el-Fyl."

"I hear and obey," said the admirer of Alexander the Great. And Hanum, after making the Astrologer a present, descended, and mounted her ass, much displeased with Furrage for having interfered with her draughts at the fountains of art, science, and literature,

and returned to her apartments at the Birket-el-Fyl, where, on the following day, she had a visitor, Sitt Zereefeh, the wife of the inspector of the Mosque of Abou Giafar;—but before we relate the conversation that passed between them, it is necessary to say something of the preliminaries of the visit.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHEIKH SAID.

As they re-entered the house, Tobia, the Coptic clerk of the establishment, who wore a blue turban, was accosted by an Effendi, who asked him, "if the Emir Yahia was in the Mandarah, or place of seeing;" and the Copt informing him that the Emir was at home, he crossed the court-yard, and presented himself to the Emir. The visitor was a person with whom our readers are not yet acquainted,—Sheikh Said, *nazir* or inspector of the Mosque of Abou Giafar, a man of low corpulent person, in which respect he was so far unprepossessing, but with a deep bass musical voice, a most intelligent good-humoured countenance, and manners of almost effeminate softness, but perfectly grave and easy.

"Welcome, Sheikh Said," said the Emir Yahia.

"And how is your own health?" said Sheikh Said. "For several years we have been wondering if ever the noble Emir Yahia would return to Cairo. What sort of a summer have you had in the Hedjas?"

"Why," said the Emir, "I am well in body, and as for health, I always spend my summers among the cool and shady groves of Tayf, but Heaven knows how often I shall spend future summers there. Egypt has her Nile, that has a fructifying inundation. Our inundation destroys and leaves nothing but ruin and desolation; and Morad Bey may think or say what he chooses, but before long the Holy Cities will be in possession of the Wahabys."

"Do not believe that we are without our inundation of sin and wickedness," said Sheikh Said, casting up the whites of his eyes; "it is surprising that God does not visit the sins of this wicked city, by making them eat of the fruit of the tree of Zakkum, which is in the

belly like fire. We live in a stiff-necked generation," continued Sheikh Said, in a tone of profound emotion.

"It would appear," said the Emir Yahia, "that the whole world is now under the scourge for its sins, or else how can we account for the unnatural state of affairs in Arabia, with the very centre of Islamism menaced; and apart from the religious ordinances, is not Mecca the moral capital of the world, uniting all humanity, and the point of meeting of the Moslems, from the shores of the great sea [Atlantic] to China, Hind, and Sind, Iran, and Turan? Here all the intelligence of the Moslem world flowed, as to the central reservoir. Cairo is great and populous,—she has a noble bountiful river, and is the capital of a country proverbial for fertility. Mecca is poor and barren, as if the Lord had intended that an abstinence from the abundance of the good things of the world, was most consistent with a life of meditation on the world to come; but Mecca is also the seat of the science of nations and varieties of people, and countries and

tongues. You have, no doubt, heard of the very cool reception that Morad Bey has given me, and you can, therefore, judge if he has at heart the interests of Islam."

"I have heard of it, and deplore it," said Sheikh Said; "they are all self-seekers, and care very little for the interests of religion."

"And of humanity at large," said the Emir Yahia. "Cairo has her men of book-learning, but the book of human nature in all its various pages and leaves, must be studied at Mecca, for there, and there alone, you daily compare the inhabitant of the banks of the Muscovite Volga, and those of the great twin rivers of China. There you learn the progress and retardation of the true faith among the most strange and distant populations; but I say it flatly, unless the Wahabys be repelled, it will be so no longer, and never was there so causeless a war."

"The war is deplorable," said Sheikh Said, "but I am afraid not quite so causeless as one could wish for. The methods they have taken are to be reprehended, and the extremes they

aim at are impracticable and pernicious, for leaving a gulf between them and all Islamism. Their success would be our disunion and disruption, and the triumph of the enemies of Islamism. But I must speak the plain and truthful sentiments of my heart—the tendency towards a greater purity of life and morals would have been laudable had it not been fraught with bloodshed. And oh! how much better if the nations had remained in the original simplicity and purity of Islam."

"What!" said the Emir Yahia, somewhat surprised; "have I known you for twelve years—and yet knew not that you had a tendency to Wahabism?"

"No," said Sheikh Said; "I have too high an opinion of you to suppose that I could take any other method of preserving your good opinion than speaking the plain and candid truth. I lament and deplore the disease, and would check it with all the means in my power; but I cannot without a sigh think of the predisposing cause and origin—the corruption into which the practice of Islamism has fallen in these latter

years; but I am free to confess that religion is the pretext for the worst crimes: and we have seen, or rather read, how the Karmates, moved by wicked ambition, sought to pull down Islamism, and treated the affairs of Heaven in the tone and temper of hell and the devil. But I sincerely trust, that the Wahabys will be put down by a strong and mighty hand—that schism will cease, but that the lesson will not be forgotten; and that instead of the fabric of our faith exploding from below, nothing could be better than a return to the ancient virtue and simplicity of Islamism."

"It is not a time for dismantling the ship for repairs, when the storm is whistling through the shrouds," said the Emir Yahia; "the first thing to be done in a political or religious tempest is to ride it out, and refit afterwards."

"I am convinced," said Sheikh Said—"I am convinced this affair of the Wahabys is doubtless a scourge. I should retire into deep meditation and sorrow—into the mosques and tombs of the desert, with only the Koran for my companion, but my son's marriage intervenes, and

as the Wahabys forbid music, we will do exactly the contrary; but," added he, turning up the white of his eyes, "I could only wish that those who practise the art of music were of a more godly manner of life. You know, Emir Yahia, the command of Scripture,—'Marry those who are single among you, and God will enrich them of his abundance, for God is bounteous and wise,' as is written in the chapter of light: and you, Emir Yahia, must come to the wedding. No; I will take no denial," said Sheikh Said, as the Emir Yahia seemed doubtful on the subject.

"Well," said the Emir, "I hope to be with you; let me know the day."

"You shall receive due notice," said Sheikh Said; "but to return to a matter that deeply concerns you," and here he lowered his voice. "I heard with regret the cold reception Morad Bey gave you; and as I have turned the matter over in my mind, allow me to speak with freedom and candour, as your hearty friend."

"Do so," said the Emir Yahia.

"You cannot," said Sheikh Said, "move a

step without a firm footing in Egypt, for unless the Porte be well assured that the leading Mameluke Beys are predisposed to the military operations, those of Constantinople will hesitate to issue orders, which will expose them to a rebuff, especially as their hands are full of business on the Danube, where Pasvan Oglu, the Pasha of Widdin, is giving them so much trouble."

"And how is the matter to be accomplished?" said the Emir Yahia.

"The road, I think, is not circuitous," said Sheikh Said, "to those who are possessed of worldly wealth, for those at the head of affairs in this country have very little thought of the interests of religion, and think of nothing but their fine houses—their fine dresses and their fine arms—their fine horses—their eatings, drinkings, merry-makings, and carnal lusts. I see comparatively little of those in power;—thanks be to God their manner of life is not my manner of life;—but I know something of the avenues of influence. For a merely carnal or temporal object I could give you no assist-

ance; but in a matter relating to the preservation of the Holy Cities from the hands of the spoiler, I am ready to place myself at your service, on condition that what I say or do in the business is to remain a profound secret, and to be revealed to no one by you, whether it fail or succeed."

"On my secrecy you may certainly depend," said the Emir Yahia; "speak freely and acquaint me with your sentiments."

"You are aware," said Sheikh Said, "of the great influence possessed by Ibrahim Bey. Were Morad Bey sole ruler of Egypt, we might despair; but, as the authority is divided, and as, on account of the internal administration and financial supplies, Ibrahim has much influence—that is the door at which you must knock, and there, I think, with a small golden key, an entrance might be found."

The Emir Yahia frowned. "What," said he, "in a matter relating to the vital interests of Islamism is there no way of arriving at our point but by giving gifts?"

"I have already told you," said Sheikh Said,

" that sin and blindness cover this land ; that its rulers are indifferent to all but their own interests ; and that I feel, along with a few other men in Cairo that we are an island in a river of corruption. Without a liberal gift, I tell you frankly—and the observation is of the utmost secrecy, lest the matter should come to the ears of Morad Bey—your journey to Constantinople is useless."

" But how is it to be managed ?" said the Emir Yahia. " I have no more funds than are barely sufficient for the necessities of my retinue on the voyage to Constantinople and back, and a gift from me is out of the question."

" Not from you individually," said Sheikh Said ; " it is for the Holy Cities, and the Shereef Ghalib ; but as there is no time to send to Mecca for funds, you can procure, I have no doubt, a sum from Sheikh Cassim on account of the Shereef of Mecca, and on your return settle the matter among you."

" And how much do you suppose would be requisite in this affair ?" said the Emir.

" I do not think less than four hundred Vene-

tian sequins. One half cash down, and the other half to be paid if the business turns out favourably."

"If there is no other method than this we must needs resort to it," said the Emir Yahia.

"But the great matter is to avoid Morad Bey's having the slightest suspicion of the matter."

"I am too much interested," said the Emir Yahia, "in the success of my own plans to dream of betraying myself. I will see Sheikh Cassim this evening, and attempt to carry through the loan, and the rest I leave to you."

Sheikh Said, having attained his point, was not long in taking his departure, highly pleased with the affair so far as it had gone.

CHAPTER IX.

OSMAN EFFENDI.

The apartments of the officials in the Castle of Cairo were very much determined by their rank, those of the great men having an aspect to the north and north-west, so as to catch the cool breeze that comes from that quarter, to avoid the glare of the sun, and to possess the varied and enlivened view of the city, and the valley of the Nile. Those who had not the good fortune to enjoy so high a rank, were consigned to apartments looking in the opposite direction.

The sun had just risen from behind Gebel-el-Gioushy, as that part of the mountain range is called, which lies to the left of the view from this apartment. Not a blade of grass or vegetation was to be seen in the whole prospect. The

mountain rose abruptly, crowned in one place by a solitary mosque, built in the time of the Fatimites, which overlooked a high precipice. At its base, a very little elevated above the level of the Nile, and intervening between the precipice and the alluvial soil deposited by the River, was a stripe of desert, covered with tombs, built in the form of small mosques.

Such was the view from the suite of rooms in which dwelt the secretary of Ibrahim Bey, who, conjointly with Morad Bey, was at that time at the head of affairs in Egypt, and in which, at five o'clock on the morning after the conversation we have described, Osman Effendi, the corpulent secretary, had just risen from bed; that is to say, from the divan on which the bed-clothes had been laid, and with many a yawn, and with his eyes swimming with the last night's gross feeding and debauch of arrack, he swallowed three or four cups of coffee in succession, which his servant presented to him, to restore his relaxed nerves; and forthwith he proceeded to clear his head of the blue devils, and his heart of malice and ill-will, by

discharging all his ill humours upon his servant, who escaped with the bed-clothes, after a torrent of abuse; but the coffee, the soothing pipe and the desert air, which came pure and cool in at the open casement, and, sterile as it was, the golden-flooded mountain, with its yellow lights and rosy shadows, as yet at this early hour unassociated with the heat of the day, conspired to put Osman Effendi into a more pleasant humour.

While engaged with his pipe, Sheikh Said entered, for early visits are not unfashionable in Egypt.

"Ho, Sheikh Said!" said Osman, familiarly; "sit you down;" but instead of treating him with the respect due to one of the Ulema, he was careful to avoid all familiarity before the servants, but was "hail fellow well met" with him, or, at all events, seemed to make himself quite easy about the good or bad opinion of the visitor.

"Well," said Osman Effendi, "and what do people say of the reception of the Emir Yahia by Morad Bey?"

"As cold as mid winter," said Sheik Said, "nothing could be colder. I called at Nasif Bey's yesterday afternoon, and had some conversation with the Emir, who could not contain his spite, and talked about his ancestors as if he had been Caliph himself."

"What could he expect?" said Osman; "he wished to carry everything through with the patronage of the Pasha, whose position in Egypt is nicely defined and limited, which limit Bekir Pasha and Hussein Pasha, his substitute, perpetually seek to infringe; but let him take care, or he may return to Constantinople before his three years are out."

"Or never return at all," said Sheikh Said.

"Many true words said in joke," said Osman Effendi; "then there is that Nasif Bey, a malcontent of the same stamp; surely it would appear as if he designed that his project should fail, else why not have entered into intimate relations only with Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey. Hussein Pasha is furious at what he calls the insult that is put upon him; but let him fret. If a large military force is to be sent

against the Wahahys, and Morad Bey gives his blood and his treasure, it is only fair that the business should be exclusively in his hands. And what news in the town?"

"Bad—there are many robberies, and people say, why have we not a more efficient police?" said Sheikh Said.

"And what do people say of the Waly?" asked Osman Effendi.

"That he is an honest good-natured man," replied the Sheikh, "but wanting in activity. Cairo is a hell, and abounds in evil spirits, and demands a much more vigilant and active man than the present Waly. I do not think that he shares the spoil; and he assigns for the cause of these robberies a gang of plunderers whom he cannot well discover. The gipsies of Hosh Bardak were at first suspected, but the place has been so repeatedly searched, that the larger robberies are attributed to other parties, although one of the gipsies, as you must have heard, was caught picking pockets in the bazaar, and care was taken that he should pick no more with his right hand."

"The difficulty with the Waly," said Osman Effendi, "is that he is an old soldier, and once saved the life of Morad Bey, at the affair of El-Arish; and Morad Bey has ever since had a kindness for him, so that, although he is not one of our men, Ibrahim Bey would do himself no good by getting him dismissed; and surely it is better to have a few robberies in the town than to say anything which might disturb the harmony between these two men."

"You are right," said Sheikh Said, and clenched the matter with a convenient quotation from the Koran. "But let me tell you," continued he, with some hesitation, "Government would do well to spend more money in getting accurate information, not only regarding its enemies, but those who are its friends."

Osman Effendi saw how this departure, with a general thesis, would arrive by gradual but rapid stages at a particular application to the individual case of the interlocutor, and the relation in which his secret services stood to the strong box of Ibrahim Bey; so, abruptly

shifting the conversation, as a cloud crossed his brow, he asked Sheikh Said, "What news of Nasif Bey?"

"He is always civil to me," said the Sheikh, "but curious, and does not take to me heartily —is very fond of a joke, and relishes my conversation upon general topics, but is shy of all political subjects."

"Have you heard what was the subject of the long confabulation between him and the Pasha the other day?" asked Osman Effendi.

"His pipe-bearer told my scout, Abderahman, that there was nothing of consequence discussed, as far as he heard, and that it related to the visit of the Emir Yahia," replied Sheikh Said.

"And what should you really judge to be the cause of the strong interest that Nasif Bey appears to take in this affair?" said Osman Effendi.

"I have turned the matter over in my mind," said Sheikh Said, "and I think that there must be something brewing. If Morad Bey could be lured away, with a prospect of renown, to some distant and dangerous expedition, in the

Hedjas, we should then hear of something in Cairo during his absence; or if Nasif Bey got the command, as he has considerable personal courage, as well as political and military talents, a successful campaign in Arabia would not only place great power at his disposal, but might open the avenue to a state of things which would make Morad Bey go the same road as Ali and Mohammed, his predecessors."*

"A variety of circumstances," said Osman, "awake suspicion, and lead us to suppose that there must be something going on, which it is desirable to know. As for the Pasha, he is impotent, and can do nothing; but Nasif

* "Ali Bey, on a smaller scale, went through a career resembling in several respects that of Mahommed Ali in our own generation. He was a man, although uneducated, yet of remarkable talents, free from many of the prejudices of his adopted country, and anxious to introduce the civilization of Europe. He had attained the position of virtual ruler of Egypt—he marched an army into Syria, in alliance with the celebrated rebel Daher, and defeated a large force of the Porte; but he was prodigal and oppressive, and being defeated at Salehieh by the young Morad, who, in conjunction with Mohammed Bey, had revolted against his power, he came by his death, either through poison, or through his wounds."

is as cunning as a fox, and, besides, has ample means, and a great number of people about him on whom he can depend. It is therefore essentially important that we should have much fuller information as to what passes in his house and hareem than we at present possess."

"There are means, Osman Effendi, if I mistake not," said Sheikh Said; "but on one point we must come to a clear understanding. You must be well aware, that for several months I have not seen the sight of a gold ducat of yours, although I have procured you information through all channels — Ulema, scouts, and pipe-bearers."

"For weeks, you mean," said Osman Effendi, with a cloud crossing his brow. "In the matter of money you are a perfect sieve, and are insatiable. I speak to you as a friend. Your expenses, Sheikh Said, must be enormous and irregular, and where is the strong box that would satisfy the demands of such as you?"

"And where," said Sheikh Said, "will you

find a man who has opportunities such as I have—who knows the whole town—who is the favourite of the whole town—who gives sumptuous entertainments to the rich, and liberal charity to the poor, and thus has a large connection in all ranks? Arnaouts, Effendis, Cafirs, Copts, Armenians, are all to be had with ease; but when you come to the Ulema for information, the tariff must correspond with the article delivered."

"Well," said Osman Effendi, "it is in your power, on the present occasion, to render us an essential service, by getting access to the hareem of Nasif Bey."

"There is nothing that I cannot get access to, from the various lines of information I hold in my hand," said Sheikh Said.

"And what basis could we have for our operations?" said Osman Effendi.

"Nasif Bey having married a young wife, contrary to the inclination of his first wife, I understand," added Sheikh Said, "that, in spite of all his tact, he is unable to preserve harmony between them, and that the more

artless and affectionate the young wife is, the more jealous is the old one, in spite of her precedence."

"Then," said Osman Effendi, "will you turn your attention to this affair of Nasif Bey, and place us at our ease in that quarter, with regard to information? Can you undertake the business?"

"What will I not undertake, from my regard to Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey?"

"And their strong boxes," said Osman Effendi, with a smile.

"No doubt," said Sheikh Said, "their strong boxes do not influence your zeal and attachment to the ruling power. If it were otherwise, I should have to suggest a small matter that lies conveniently in our way, and can be taken up without interfering with our other and more serious operations. The Emir Yahia is furious at his cold reception by Morad Bey, and nothing would be easier than to extract from him a handsome douceur, in order to make up with Ibrahim Bey the ground he lost with Morad. When will Ibrahim be sufficiently

recovered from his illness to be able to have a reception ? "

" I should suppose to-morrow, for all pain is gone, and he would have received visitors to-day, but the Hakim Bashi recommended that he should keep quiet to-day, and avoid all agitation," said Osman Effendi.

" Well then," said Sheikh Said, " what is to prevent you from using your powerful interest with Ibrahim Bey, so as to induce him to listen more favourably to the proposals of the Emir Yahia, and to show greater readiness to correspond to the views and opinions of the Pasha on the subject ? "

" It would never do," said Osman Effendi, " for such an effort on my part might seriously injure my influence for the future ; besides, it would never accord with the interests of the Mameluke Beys, and I might involve myself in the suspicion of having some connection with the party of Nasif Bey."

" You do not understand me," said Sheikh Said, " I do not mean that there should be any serious entertainment of the project of the Emir

Yahia. It is merely an affair of a civil reception, and of flattering promises, which may be fulfilled, or remain unacted upon, just as subsequently suits. Ibrahim Bey, without your broaching the matter to him, is too sure to ask you, as usual, what is your opinion on the subject; and it is then in your power to give him such sound and useful advice as will place the half of the douceur at your service."

"Well," said Osman Effendi, "if you can manage your part of the matter, I will attempt to manage mine."

"But first of all," said Sheikh Said, "I must have some money this very morning, for I have not the wherewithal to pay my servants' wages for the month, or go on with current expenses. Creditors I have in abundance, but as for credit, I cannot raise a hundred piastres from one of the bazaars of Cairo to the other, and I must look to this business of the Emir Yahia, as the only source from which I can raise the funds for the approaching marriage of my son."

"You are a sieve, a perfect sieve," said Osman Effendi, rising and laying down his

pipe; and added, "wait here a few minutes, and I will hear what Ibrahim Bey says of the matter, but you take him at the wrong moment, for he is now indisposed to entertain a matter of business."

"At the right moment," said Sheikh Said; "you have only, in two words, to connect the idea of the money asked with the suspected projects of Nasif Bey, and the matter is done."

After the lapse of ten minutes, Osman Effendi returned with a small rouleau of gold pieces, which Sheikh Said pocketed without delay, and forthwith took his departure in high spirits, both from what he had received, and from the prospect of turning the Emir Yahia into a good milch cow.

CHAPTER X.

JAGO IN PETTICOATS.

Sheikh Said, with his excessively voluble and engaging address, made an easy conquest of most of those who came near him, and certainly found it often requisite to employ this ready resource, for he constantly lived above his income, nobody knew how, and was perpetually embarrassed by creditors; but had such a peculiar talent of making people believe that he took an interest in their welfare, and was so full of ingenious shifts, and so perfectly practised the maxim, "that a soft answer turneth away wrath," that he brought the science of polite bilking to the highest pitch of refinement. Strange rumours were in circulation about a valuable library of a mosque, of which he was

the trustee, which had been burnt by accident, and the malicious tongue of scandal said that, long previously, many of the books had found their way to a wealthy bookseller, who lent his money at usurious interest. But by dint of profuse hospitality, and his engaging address, he managed to rub along, feasting and feasted.

His wife, Sitt Zereefeh, was as dishonest as himself, but, instead of exercising his noble generosity with other people's wealth, she was rather avaricious, and, in spite of his desperate debts and disorders, had a large stock of jewels, not one of which, in his utmost pecuniary embarrassments, was available as stop-gaps. Threats and persuasions were by turns employed, in his hours of distress, to induce her to put a jewel in pawn, but her philosophy was proof against all his efforts.

"If you are orderly and economical in your affairs," said she, "you do not need my jewels; if you are disorderly, it would be honey lent to the cat."

"There is no power but in God Almighty,"

he would say ; "you are as difficult to move as the castle of Cairo."

"You have a chance of moving the castle," she would answer, "but none of moving me ;" and as his wife was the safest and most discreet partner in the most nefarious of his intrigues, he found it most wise and prudent neither to divorce her nor quarrel with her. Such was the person who visited Hanum after her return from the visit to the astrologer, who was all the way home interpreting her quarrel with Fatimeh by the vague generalities of this impostor, who was invariably perfectly safe in discovering, that the applicants for information had some enemy whom they hated ; and some friend who took an interest in them ; for who is so fortunate as not to have enemies ?

"I have come," said Zereefeh, "to ask the favour of your hareem's presence at the marriage of my son, which is to take place on Thursday next. I wish to have the most beautiful and accomplished women in Cairo, and the first person I thought of was the wife of Nasif Bey. We shall have a great illumination, with

dancers, and singers, and, Inshallah! we shall make merry."

"A thousand thanks," said Hanum, "I will not fail to come, and may the domestic interior of your son be as happy as that of his mother!"

"I hope much happier than that of his mother," said Zereefeh; "your kindness of heart and generous sympathies are well known, but the fact is, although my husband is of the most unimpeachable honesty and integrity, and of the most sincere piety, he is a little cross-tempered, and too generous, so that we have an occasional squabble; besides, it is, perhaps, partly my own fault, for if I am sincere, so as even frequently to give offence to both friends and foes, I confess myself occasionally a little warm-tempered, so that when two fires meet there is a double warmth. As for you, how happy might Nasif Bey be, to have a wife as beautiful as good, and as good as beautiful, and such a splendid palace as you have brought him in dowry. I really think that this is the first durkaa in Cairo," added she, looking at the

floor of variegated marble, the rich carpet of the alcove, the satin cushions fringed with gold, and the roof so richly carved.

"Alack," said Hanum, "nobody thinks less of such toys than I do, for what can fine clothes or houses do for domestic happiness?"

"I understand you," said Zereefeh, as she perceived that she had touched the sore point of Hanum, whose countenance she watched at every turn of the conversation. "It is singular and unaccountable, that the woman whose praises I hear in all societies, should not enjoy the domestic happiness to which her exemplary virtues entitle her, not less than the large fortune which she brought her husband."

Now thought Hanum to herself, I seem to understand the astrologer, I wonder whether, if I were to unbosom myself to her, she would turn out to be the friend whom the astrologer said would appear to help me out of all my difficulties.

"My life," said Hanum, aloud, "if the truth must be spoken, has been so far from one of enjoyment and happiness, in consequence

of the wealth and luxury at my command, that I envy the poorest woman I see in the streets, even the gipsy who hawks about veils in the hareem, or any other despised creature. I was the daughter of Hassan Menoufy Effendi, the Rouznamgi (collector of land taxes), and you know the proverb, 'rich as a Rouznamgi,'—I was indulged in every humour and caprice,—my health was injured by being indulged in whatever my appetite fancied, and my temper was spoiled by never being contradicted,—thus my youth was spent in a continued series of fits of indignation and ill-humour against those who had the good sense to give me sound advice; and when I grew up to woman's estate my father, by way of making my fortune, married me to Berber Bey, who was immensely rich, and not only old and ugly, but so exhausted with indulgence, that he would sit for hours in the hareem, without opening his mouth, his hand even shaking as it held the pipe. I had jewels, Cashmere shawls, slaves at my bidding, a fine house in town, and a villa at Rodah, in the middle of the orange groves;

but nothing came to relieve me from the dreadful ennui of my existence. At last my father and husband both died, leaving me the richest widow in Cairo, and then I married Nasif Bey, the bravest and handsomest cavalier in Egypt, and the most gentle and polished. For a time he was kind and affectionate, but now that he has taken for his second wife this cozening young Bosniac, she has by foul enchantment turned his brain, and alienated him from me, so that all my life, in spite of my wealth, happiness has been like the lake in the desert, which vanishes on approach, and turns out to be only a salt and arid plain."

"But," said Zereefeh, "is there no way of bettering your position? She is younger than you are, but you have more talent and experience. How strange that Nasif Bey should be blind to that! Does he never consult you on politics?"

"Never. I am not in his confidence," said Hanum.

"But I will be bound to say that the other is," said Zereefeh, "and, mayhap, not without

ambition, and the inclination to rise on the credit of his schemes to power. If I were in your position, I should take care that her schemes did not succeed, and that it might appear that you gave him the sounder advice, and took the sounder view of his schemes and companions; for I suspect that he is embarked in dark political designs, that will bring you no good, but much evil, unless they be frustrated in time."

"This woman is a valued friend," thought Hanum to herself, as Zereefeh proceeded, "and the astrologer could mean no other person than her." Thus reasoned she, and her mind set in this direction, she forthwith associated the intelligence given her by the eunuch, with new triumphs of influence for her rival, whom she now suspected to be in Nasif's political confidence, and was thus predisposed to give a willing ear to the dark insinuations and sinister projects of Zereefeh.

"Have you heard the news from the castle?" said Zereefeh.

"No," said Hanum.

"Hussein Pasha gives a dinner to the Emir Yahia, to which Ibrahim Bey and Nasif Bey are invited. Morad Bey wished to excuse himself, but the Pasha got Ibrahim Bey to speak to him, representing, that if he were not of the party, his personal dignity as Pasha would unnecessarily suffer, and so it is to take place. No doubt you have heard of it?"

"No," said Hanum, confused and thoughtful.

"What!" said Zereefeh, "does Fatimeh, who is in Nasif's confidence, not give you even the common scraps of news?"

"Not a word," said Hanum, indignantly.

"And of course you take care how you say anything to Nasif Bey, when you are sure that he repeats everything to her?" said Zereefeh. "I applaud your prudence in keeping your counsels to yourself."

"I could take my revenge if I chose," said Hanum, with a countenance of gall and wormwood that showed Zereefeh that her poison was beginning to take effect. "I possess a secret that would set all the castle of Cairo by

the ears, and the possession of which, if known to Nasif Bey, might cost me my life."

"Then," said Zereefeh, "take my sincere advice, reveal it to no one in whom you have not the most perfect confidence."

"Are you willing to assist me in the matter of my rival?" said Hanum.

"Most willing," said Zereefeh, who could scarcely conceal a smile of exultation at having brought Hanum to the desired point; "not only willing, but I flatter myself," added she, with a knowing toss of the head, "not without some ability."

"Well, then," said Hanum, "the love I bore to Nasif has died a natural death, in consequence of his coolness and selfish indifference; so I desire to get him to divorce Fatimeh, for if his political schemes succeed, he will have wealth and power independently of my fortune, and then he will cast me off altogether; for if I do not love him, I hold to him by pertinacity, and long to be avenged on Fatimeh for her affronts. Now I have learned that a plot is in existence to destroy both

Morad Bey, and Ibrahim Bey, and to seize the castle, and partly from one thing, partly from another, I guess that it must be on the occasion of this entertainment."

"It is desirable, even for the interest of Nasif Bey," said Zereefeh, "that he should be diverted from the scheme, or if that be not possible, that it should fail."

"This would expose me to the vengeance of Nasif Bey," said Hanum, somewhat alarmed.

"Not at all," said Zereefeh; "he is never to know that you are acquainted with the plot. Fatimeh might be made to appear the person who revealed the secret."

"But," said Hanum, continuing, with compunctions of conscience, to exhibit symptoms of alarm, which Zereefeh strove to allay, "I wish no harm to come to Nasif Bey, and only the divorce of Fatimeh."

"I perfectly understand you," said Zereefeh; "I will turn the matter carefully over in my mind, and then we shall see more of each other; but," added she, with *nonchalance*, "it would not do for Fatimeh to suppose that you had unduly

prejudiced me against her. I will therefore pay her a short visit, and ask her company to my son's wedding."

So saying, Sitt Zereefeh took her departure.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WEDDING NIGHT.

"Well, Khaled," said Ahmed Aga, on the Thursday following this conversation, "I have ever since that business of Selim Aga been exceedingly pleased with your cool courage and fidelity; and, as far as I can judge, your heart is white. You expressed a wish to enter the service of Nasif Bey;—well, I believe, that if I gave him a strong recommendation there would be no difficulty in your being attached to him, for he is an exceedingly brave man. I shall see him this evening, but not in the way of business, for an acquaintance of ours has a marriage in his house, to which I am going; and as there will be plenty of fun, you can go with me."

Khaled answered by thanking the Aga, and after sunset they proceeded to the house of Sheikh Said, which was situated on the Croon-fish, a little to the west of the great line of bazaars that runs southwards from the Sebeel Abderrahman Kiahya.

While Friday is dedicated to Venus in the mythology of northern Europe, Thursday night is, according to Cairo ideas, propitious to the entrance into the holy state of matrimony, and abundant evidence of this was visible on that evening. No gas shone, no shop opened, and no wheels rattled, but ever and anon the glare of cressets, the sound of the shrill clarion and the measured cadence of the tambourine, announced a marriage procession, and invaded the darkness and silence of nocturnal warfare. Stunned by the din and dazzled by the blaze, Khaled and his captain would withdraw their animals into a corner at each passage of a marriage procession, until the tide of merriment swept past. Onward again the retreating lights, and the music reverberating more and more faintly, left no sight or sound but the lan-

terns of the men who walked in front, and the step of the horse of the Aga and the ass of Khaled on the dusty unpaved ground, until the challenge of a guard resounded under some vaulted passage, with the words, "*Ya Daim*," "Oh Eternal! Oh Everlasting!" to which the answer usually given by towns people was, "I am a son of the town," and to which those in the garb of soldiers were expected to give no response.

A peep of lights at the end of the vista in sight of the animals, seemed to quicken their pace, until at length Khaled found himself in the midst of a crowd of servants, with saddled asses and horses thronging the entrance, where they dismounted, and on entrance found the court-yard brilliantly illuminated, the alcove being fitted up with a carpet where the grandees invited to the feast sat in full dress.

The most prominent of these dignitaries were the Emir Yahia, Nasif Bey, and other persons, including the intimate friend of Sheikh Said,—Eyoub Bey, surnamed Yeshil, or the Green, who had a white beard and mustachios—the

space in the centre of the hair that covered his chin being brown by the quantity of strong Saloniki tobacco which he smoked. This tender swain, evergreen in name and evergreen in nature, was in his honeymoon, and had been in that happy state for above thirty years; for when he became a rich man (he was now sixty-five at least), he married a new wife every fortnight, and in his old age continued the course of true love at the rate of a new wife a month, about a dozen a year (only half of his former allowance): so that his hareem was like a parterre, enjoying perpetual spring weather; not that of the merry month of May, but rather April, when rain and sunshine, smiles and tears, alternate with each other; for in order to remain a strict orthodox Moslem and avoid the crime of pentegamy, or a fifth wife, which in Moslem manners is as objectionable as a fifth wheel to a coach, one wife was always divorced to make way for another. At the foot of the divan was his son, the Emir Sunkor, a young man of promise, but certainly not of performance. A Jew, tired of dunning him for

a debt, having ultimately sought to crack his credit, he resented the affront by getting the Jew's house set on fire, and himself almost burnt to death. This young man, no doubt, thought that the most effectual method of extinguishing a debt is to burn the creditor; but this very nearly brought him into a serious scrape with justice; and it was only the high credit of his father that carried him out of trouble.

Another of the company, who kept at a respectful distance from the great people, but was at once recognized by Khaled, who therefore kept near the door, was Sheikh Hamood, who was now as talkative as ever, and carefully eschewed all allusion to Sheikh Cassim, or the affair of the boy, and discussed somewhat philosophically with Ahmed Aga, who recognized him, the respective advantages of war and matrimony.

"And how like you the festival?" said Sheikh Hamood.

"Oh, bravely," said the Aga; "it is indeed a noble rejoicing."

"Yes," said Hamood, "I guess the frankincense is pleasanter than the smoke of cannon."

"These peaceful times," said the Arnaout, "are tiresome for the true soldier; war is the most exciting of all games; and then there is always a prospect of beauty and booty; a life of ease has no charms for the soldier."

"I believe you," quoth Sheikh Hamood, "nor hath the ease of others charms for the soldier; and as for booty and beauty, they are no doubt excellent things to get, but not to give—for no man likes to give them as long as he hath life, and if he have life without possessions in goods and beauty, small enjoyment doth it give him, and as for booty without life, that is worse still. So, may God prolong the peaceful times, that keep beauty and booty from circulating about, and retain them in a stagnating condition!"

"Then you are no friend of the Emir Yahia, who is sitting in the divan there, who wishes Morad Bey to send a force from Egypt to put down the Wahabys?" said Ahmed Aga Arnaout.

"I confess," said Sheikh Hamood, "that I, for my part, have no fancy for these reforming Wahabys; according to their theory, the smoke of tobacco, that enlivens a man, is a deadly sin, and the smoke of gunpowder and shot a virtue. I confess their religion is not to my taste, for they would fain banish all fiddles and lutes, and even a marriage party should pass without a merry strain or a few enlivening airs; but all this harmony is a deadly sin, and they prefer, instead of 'Doosya-leli' or any other sweet tune, the explosion of blunderbusses, or the cracking of skulls, or the groans of the dying. Their doctrines would bring confusion into the world —they disapprove of all silks and satins and bright colours. What then would become of the bazaar of the silk-cord workers in Cairo? What would become of the poor weavers of silks and satins in Damascus, in Aleppo, and in Cairo? What would become of the honourable craft of silk dyers, and how could Sheikh Cassim get his shop-rent from Hannah the dyer?"

"The Almighty," said Sheikh Said, who, scarcely able to conceal a smile, had heard the latter part of this conversation, "cannot be displeased either with bright colours, or silks and satins, for he arrayed the butterfly in colours surpassing in brilliancy those of the dyer, and he gave us the silk-worm; so let no man say that we are not to make a rational use of the good things of this world, and there the Wahabys are quite wrong. And as for music, whoever adheres to tradition must admit it, for I ask any one, did not Abd-el-Ghany make the lute hanging on the wall to chant of its own accord the words of the chapter of unity, with a stringed symphony, — 'Say God is one God, the eternal God—he begetteth not, neither is begotten, and there is not any one like unto him'"?

Loud and joyful noises now interrupted this conversation, being those of the return of the marriage procession from the mosque where the bridegroom had been to say his prayers, accompanied by his youthful friends. A species of monotonous chant was now

heard, and the young man entering the alcove kissed the hands of all the principal guests round and round, and last of all that of his own father. But he did not remain long, for while the professional chanters who had accompanied him, and are called, technically, Sons of the Night, were reciting verses of the Koran, he slipped away, this being the so called Night of Entrance, and being conveyed by his companions to the door of the hareem, he knocked, and it was opened unto him. Being provided with a purse, several displays of generosity took place to the female attendants within, and a dark crimson Cashmere shawl, which was the colour of the turban he wore, having been thrown over the bride's face, he had again recourse to his purse, and, presenting her with a gold piece, removed it in order to verify the charms of his bride, which had been magnified and extolled so as to captivate his youthful imagination ; and after having invoked the name of the most merciful God, and repeated two prayers with his face turned towards Mecca,

uproarious cries of joy were soon after raised by the crowd of women waiting at the door of the apartment, for the Angel of Life had opened his register and inscribed on its page that in due season Sheikh Said might possibly be a grandfather.

The sight of Sheikh Hamood had deterred Khaled from standing in the vicinity of the alcove, where the grandees were seated, and the space opposite which was strongly illuminated, he therefore, to change the scene, went out to the street, where the cressets were blazing and the crowd of servants assembled. Among them he recognized the same groom who held the ass of Melusina in the house of Nasif Bey; but on this occasion the animal he held was a high horse, he therefore suspected that Moro must be among the company; this induced him to return inside; he accordingly examined more minutely the persons sitting in the alcove, and there he accordingly saw the said gentleman in conversation with one of the Mameluke Beys. Khaled was not long in being recognized by Sheikh

Hamood even under his Albanian costume, and was made conscious of the fact, by a familiar and undignified slap on the shoulder, similar to that with which he had been saluted in the bazaar.

"*What! Arnaouty, Arnaouty*, so you are a soldier?" said Hamood.

"Yes, for a time," said Khaled: "how are you?"

"*Ouwh*, as well as can be expected," said Hamood, whose compunction ever since the affair of the wine-jar made him, except when dragged into the subject, eschew all allusion to the misfortune of Sheikh Cassim's house. "A fine festival," continued he; "what think you?"

"Very magnificent," said Khaled, "and apparently attended by all the great men in Cairo."

"By many of them," said Hamood; "do you know them already?"

"Not all of them," said Khaled; "can you tell me their names?"

"*Ouwh*, surely," said Hamood; "that man

in the corner with the chocolate robes is Osman Bey-el-Bardissi, and that other next him is Mohammed Bey-el-Elfy, and the one beyond him is the Cadi, and the one next him is the Mufti, and he beyond that is Sheikh Mebergi-el-Dakak, and the one next him is an accursed Cafir—the Consul of Venice."

"Is he a rich man," said Khaled, briskly interrupting him before he passed on to the others, "and a man that stands high with his own nation?"

"Nobody knows him better than me," said Hamood, "for is not Sheikh Cassim one of the leading merchants? He was rich but he is now bankrupt, or something like it, and his credit has been in a shaky condition for some time back, and Sheikh Cassim refused to trust him a farthing. One day, not very long ago, he came to him saying, with the polite plausible manner of those Franks,—

"'Sheikh Cassim, my worthy friend, all the town talks of your liberal dealings; I have a parcel of gums to make up for a house in correspondence with mine, and I give you, my

worthy friend, the preference, but remember you must take a bill.'

"'I am obliged to you,' said Cassim, coolly, 'but I hope the talk of all the town is not always to be trusted.'

"'Yes, but it is,' said Moro.

"'I am sorry for that,' said Cassim, 'for all the town is speaking of your difficulties—the only virtue I take credit for is candour, so, for hard cash, I am at your service.'

"'What,' said Moro, the blood flying to his face, 'do you not know that it is the capital of our European banks that carries on the beggarly affairs of this country?—the Franks could ruin you, if they chose.'

"'And how,' asked Sheikh Cassim with perfect composure, 'do you propose to ruin a man that could live on two piastres a day —and *has got it?*'" added Hamood with emphasis.

"Anybody but Cassim, would have raised the bazaar and got him mobbed and murdered, but he quietly waited until the Bairam, when Moro made his visit—and thus the crack was

soldered. The impudent Cafir, I should not have let him off so easily."

"Then he is now poor," said Khaled pensively.

"Oh, but he is going to get rich again; our Christian clerk told me that he has a niece of great beauty, and she is about to be married to a man of great wealth, who will advance him money to begin the world again;—but I must tell you the rest of the names," said Sheikh Hamood, and he continued his catalogue, but Khaled was too much confounded by this news to pay much attention; and as the reader may now feel curious to know what foundation there existed for this report, we shall beg his company for a few chapters to the Frank quarter of Cairo.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRANK QUARTER.

Signor Giovanni Moro, the head of the Cairo branch of his family, had entered the world with good prospects, having been for some time Consul of the Republic of Venice, in Cairo, and his representatives on the shores of the Adriatic managed for him the letting of certain houses belonging to a confraternity of merchants in Venice, which by abuse had come to have only three members; therefore, the third of the revenue of this confraternity, derived from the rents as well as from deposits in the banks of Venice and San Giorgio, in Genoa, and the Monte di Pieta, in Rome, exceeded the emoluments of his consulate. But instead of being a laborious and economical merchant,

he had been hospitably expensive, *poco curante*, and a borrower by anticipation of his remittances. The fall of the Venetian Republic was, therefore, little short of ruin to him; he was not a rogue by natural bent, but circumstances had relaxed his ideas of the proper standard of probity. Gay, thoughtless, and confiding, he had entered into and prosecuted the voyage of life as if sunshine were to be eternal; but the storms of the revolutionary war had taken him aback in the very midst of his imprudence; and a Levantine education was certainly not the school to teach him that energy and perseverance will carry a man buoyantly through every conceivable strait, except in case of a dereliction of the fair way of honesty and integrity.

He resided in the Mousky, which is that part of Cairo which has the greatest resemblance to the mongrel character of the Levantine ports, and is well known to Indian travellers since the introduction of the over-land passage; for here a short bazaar, covered in from the heat of the sun, shows the goose and scissors of the French tailor, and the gallipots of the Italian

apothecary, side by side, with the Greek slop shop, or omnium gatherum of the unsaleable and unfashionable wares of Marseilles, Sheffield, and Birmingham. And here lounges the European adventurer who has suddenly left home, forgetting to pay his debts, and the full-figged swell, a traveller and a virtuoso, who is a corresponding member of a private numismatic society, which the chief of the police persists in calling a gang of coiners.

But the crowds of honest tourists and dishonest adventurers that now throng the Frank quarter of Cairo was unknown at the period we speak of, and the metropolis was neither adorned with the delightful alleys and parterres of the Ezbeckieh,—nor disfigured by the substitution of the tasteless barn-fashioned houses of Europe for the domestic architecture of the native Cairo school, which is equally remarkable for its solidity, its luxuriant ornaments, and its adaptation to the climate, if cleanliness be attended to.

The private room of Signor Moro was a small apartment off his counting-house, on the ground-floor, one side of it being fitted up for a

divan; for even in Frank business pipes and coffee entered largely into the discussion of affairs. Above it hung a faded hydrographical chart of the Mediterranean, and a somewhat fabulous manuscript map of the gum countries of the Upper Nile; and opposite it was a picture of a century back, representing the San Cosmo and Damiano, a high-sterned galleon labouring in a storm; but St. Mark appearing in heaven, surrounded by a halo, and forbidding the forked lightning to destroy the vessel, in answer to a prayer of its pious captain, and hence on safe arrival at Venice, the patronage of Saints Cosmo and Damiano was forthwith declined; and the galleon, which the great-grandfather of Signor Moro owned, bore ever afterwards the name of "Il Generoso Marco."

In this apartment sat Moro, with rueful visage, for an event had occurred which completely disconcerted him. His means had been gradually diminishing, and unable to sustain the prospect of a diminution in his style of living, and a descent from the position he had hitherto occupied, he resolved, like a desperate

gambler, to play double or quits, and forthwith realized a considerable portion of the remainder of his funds, and embarked them in the profitable but hazardous carrying trade of the Mediterranean; and the following letter, which I copy faithfully from the originals of the complete archives of the Moro family, by the permission of Signor Giovanni Fenestrella, according to the order furnished me by Signora Melusina, the last surviving relic of that family, shortly before her decease, in 1846, throws full light on the position of Moro's affairs at this period.

"Letter of Ercole Mancin, Captain of the 'Twelve Apostles,' to Signor Fortunato Fenestrella, agent of Signor Giovanni Moro, at Alexandria, dated 5th May, 1798.

"Most Illustrious Sir,—With a grieved and heavy heart I have to inform you of the unfortunate issue of our late voyage, commenced under the most favourable auspices, which carried us in four days to Cape San Giovanni, in the island of Candia; and being no

longer under the glorious banner of the Republic of Genoa, but hoisting French colours, I kept, according to orders, a solicitous look-out for the cruizers of England. But one day, being in north latitude, 36° 4′, and longitude (illegible from a blot), I saw to windward a large English frigate, and making all sail attempted to hold on until the veil of night should protect us, but soon saw the impossibility of this, for the fifth shot fired at us in chase having choked our rudder, no alternative was left but to lay-to and surrender the good ship, the 'Twelve Apostles,' which I have commanded for the last seven years to the hitherto satisfaction of its illustrious owners.

"I thank God we have been treated with perfect courtesy and gentility by the officers; and an attempt on the part of an English sailor to steal two bottles of rosoglio was punished with stripes. The name of the frigate is 'Cholmondeley,' and the captain's name is Bicim. We are now in Gibraltar harbour, awaiting to be adjudged by the Court of Admiralty here; but as the American vessel that carries this is

about to sail, excuse my cutting short, and accept the regrets of your faithful and obedient servant,

"Ercole Mancin."

"P. S.—If you should communicate with the consular authorities in Egypt, I have just learned that the captain's name is not Bicim, but Beauchamp; and the vessel is pronounced not 'Cholmondeley,' but 'Ciamli.'"

While unpleasantly ruminating on the contents of this letter, he was somewhat disagreeably interrupted by the presence of Signor Muranesi, the archæologist, whom Sheikh Hamood had met exploring the suburbs of Cairo. He was a man of flabby cheeks, perfectly yellow in colour, about fifty years of age, and sufficiently ungainly in appearance. After the death of his father he had succeeded to a considerable inheritance, and having dabbled in history, geography, antiquity, philosophy, politics, and morals, with a sprinkling of Oriental languages, and a great many guesses about hieroglyphics, he wanted only a mo-

derate amount of common sense to be one of the most accomplished men of his age, but this sad deficiency spoiled all, and his knowledge was like his portable library, as remarkable for its extent as for its higgledy-piggledy order. He was now preparing to spend a second winter in Egypt, having during the previous season made an ascent of the Nile.

Detesting the old Venetian government, as well from French democratic ideas, which he had imbibed, as from dislike of the senatorial aristocracy of Venice, he was an intense admirer of Napoleon, and would describe his Italian campaign with great zest—Millesimo, Montenotte, Mondego, and Lodi, all splendidly,—but before ever the auditor knew what he was about, he was back to Genghis Khan. Violent and enthusiastic in his opinions, he was at the same time so void of guile and malice, that he generally disarmed the anger which, in those days of trenchant division of peoples and governments, might have been incurred by his opinions, and Moro, being

not only of an old family (although not of the Moros of the twelfth century), but having also suffered so severely by the revolutionary wars, and, being choleric, felt a certain delight in making the walls resound with the ardour of his convictions, but the intelligence of the morning had considerably exacerbated him, which he showed in his countenance and manner on Signor Muranesi entering, who having little tact and observation, did not perceive it.

"And what news do you bring, Signor Muranesi?" said Moro, "looking surly and inhospitable, as he clapped his hands and ordered pipes and coffee.

"Oh, glorious news for humanity, and for England too," said Signor Muranesi; "our little hero is preparing another expedition, but no one knows exactly for where, but report designates England, and we may soon hear of new Rivolis and Arcolas on the banks of the Tamigia, my friend."

"You call that glorious news for French sans-culotte humanity in a uniform, and shoulder-

ing a musket," said Moro scornfully; "surely you cannot call it good news for England?"

"For England, certainly," said Muranesi. "Poor unhappy England, I pity her from the bottom of my soul. A few aristocrats keep that nation in thraldom. The hero of Lodi and Arcola has only to show himself, and Pitt and his guineas will not prevent General Bonaparte from giving liberty and equality to a people subject to an aristocracy, with the mere phantom of free institutions. What a wonderful era ours is! Rome, the centre of all superstition, now belongs to democracy—the new gospel which will spread all over the earth."

"And a baptism of blood," said Moro, "your new gospel has instituted; if some abuses existed in old France, or in our glorious old Venice of San Marco, mankind knew none of the recent horrors; and to place the culmination of those detestable crimes by storming the Holy Father himself, in the Eternal city, is an act of sacrilegious presumption which has never before been seen in Christendom."

"I deplore the shedding of blood," said Muranesi; "and even when obliged to mix with the common people of this country, in boats and elsewhere, have scruples of conscience in destroying any vermin I may discover: but when was the world regenerated with out the baptism of blood? The only cure for such a state of things would be the adoption of my model of a perfect republic, which would make severely penal all manufacture of the weapons of war, and would compel men to fight by syllogism instead of artillery."

"And what syllogism," said Moro, "would reduce to obedience those who stick to the theory of artillery?"

"Ah, my dear Sir, you must first read my work, a copy of which, when printed, you must accept, and you will find that subject discussed in First Series, Vol. iv., Book viii. Society is on the high road to perfectibility, but is certainly a long way from having arrived at its journey's end, and in the mean time a large sacrifice of human life is unavoidable, for, as the great Campanella said,—'Society is built

of ruins,'—the ruins are men, but the edifice is humanity. General Bonaparte comprehends his mission, and I predict its complete success; and that through his instrumentality we are yet destined to see the last baubles of royalty in Europe burnt on a pile along with the last paraphernalia of priests and cardinals."

"Oh Bella!" said Moro, "I must see a little more of this General Bonaparte before I agree with you. The command of an army is a good school for the practical statesman of a monarchy, or of a stable republic, as we have seen in the case of those who bore the glorious banner of St. Mark, but not for the cultivation of your ideas of equality. He is as likely to become a Cromwell or a Cæsar as anything else."

"Heaven forbid!" said Muranesi, "his career should be interrupted by the trappings of royalty—the thunder and lightning must precede the serene weather, and when the banks of the Thames and the Tiber have received the new doctrines, the East has still to be awakened out of its lethargy; and who knows but so

daring a genius might plant the banners of equality on the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Oxus? and that the Tartar tribes, that swept over Europe under a Genghis Khan and a Timour, might fraternize with the West, and, reversing the direction in which the waves of empire have usually rolled, accept from the arms of the new Alexander of liberty and equality, the arts of renovated Europe?"

"*Ticchiti Tacchiti!*" said Moro; "I hope that the English, who are the modern Venetians, if ever they catch this rat in their trap, will not let him loose; and as for the French ever setting foot in Egypt, God prevent it! we are well as we are."

"I see," said Muranesi, "that we are, as usual, at the antipodes of opinion; but here comes a visitor, so I wish you good morning."

As Muranesi made his exit, Signor Bartolomei, a Genoese of short stature and ignoble features, entered the room abruptly, taking no notice of Muranesi, and, scarcely saluting Signor Moro, set himself down on the divan,

and throwing himself into a corner, said, when Muranesi was gone, "Well, Signor Moro, I hope you have better news for me this time than you had when I paid my last visit."

"Indeed I have not," said Moro, "but worse news, for the instalment of my debt, which I counted on paying at the time agreed upon, is more than I can raise; and the 'Twelve Apostles' has been taken by the English cruisers and carried into Gibraltar."

"I do not pretend to unravel your affairs," said the merchant, tartly, "the question is—Can you pay your bond? I have my engagements, which I cannot fulfil unless those who owe me money fulfil theirs to me. What signifies it to me whether or not you have lost the 'Twelve Apostles.' I do not pretend to interfere in your affairs, but I expect that you will find the means of liquidating your own bond."

"This day, then, I am a bankrupt," said Moro,—"my resources are exhausted."

"A bankrupt!—then you defraud me of three thousand dollars. *Maledetto*," continued the

fair-haired man, "we shall see what the law says of those who are bankrupt after possessing large resources."

"Your anger blinds your judgment," said Moro; "how could I foresee that a republic of twelve centuries would disappear like a dream? How could I foresee that the Consul of Venice would lose his place? How could I foresee that the 'Twelve Apostles' should be captured by the English, who never warred with the ancient republics of Venice and Genoa? No; I will call my creditors together; the truth shall be declared; nothing shall be concealed: and then I can say, like the French king, all is lost except honour."

The look of Signor Bartolomei changed from irritation at Moro, into internal mortification; and feeling that insolence to his debtor was useless, he took out his snuff-box, and shaking it up took a pinch, with a face as if it were a bitter medicine. After pausing a moment, he again turned to Moro, and asked if he could count on no friend to assist him in this pinch.

"No, indeed," said Moro; "since I have lost

my place and got into difficulties — those whom I have assisted in days gone by, have short memories; and it appears that people lend only to the rich—the strong house is repaired if a little out of order, but the ruinous one is abandoned. My resources are at an end, and I will thank any man to point out to me some means of repairing my shattered fortunes. I once hoped to establish my niece in the world, and give her a suitable dowry; but he that hopeth for nothing shall never be disappointed."

"What need for a dower," said Signor Bartolomei, fixing his eyes on Moro, "if she can get a rich husband? Might not such a union help you out of your difficulties?"

"And where is this rich husband to be found?" said Moro, opening his eyes in curiosity.

"What!" said Signor Bartolomei, with a grunting laugh, "do you not know that Muranesi is over head and ears in love with Signora Melusina?"

"*Cospetto*, do you say so! He seems always in the clouds of his political and social theories."

"That may be," said Bartolomei; "but his wealth is on terra firma—an estate in the Friuli—a villa at Duolo, and then, if we go from land to water, four large houses at the Giudecca, besides the slice of a palace on the Canal Grande, not to mention the dark den and the premises in the Merceria, where his father made all the zecchins. He may build castles in the air, but his father before him was terrestrial enough; and after all, his literary and political theories do not dissipate wealth like gambling and excessive hospitality."

"True, true," said Moro, hastily, who did not relish his creditor making allusion to his convivial habits.

"Take my advice, then," said Signor Bartolomei, "do not declare yourself bankrupt; carry through this marriage, and we will see what can be made of it."

"My dividend would be a small one, indeed," said Moro, with a sardonic grin; "but I incline to your project, and shall see to the matter."

"You know," said Signor Bartolomei, plau-

sibly, "the friendship I have always had for you? *Pazienza*, shuffle your cards well, and believe me, Signor Moro, whenever you need the advice of a friend, command me."

"In the mean time," said Moro, "do me the favour to give me your company this day week at dinner."

"I accept your invitation," said Bartolomei, after a slight hesitation: so saying, he rose and departed, in a better humour than when he entered.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VISIONARY.

Moro forthwith proceeded to the lodgings of Muranesi, which were in a picturesque confusion of mummies in their cases, ancient Egyptian domestic utensils, Saracenic armour, books, manuscripts, and modern necessaries. He was sitting with a pen in his hand, at a coarse wooden desk that had been rigged for the occasion, which contrasted rather awkwardly with the satin cushions around him, and in a state of exalted inspiration, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, was perfectly unconscious of the entry of Moro until he had apostrophized him with "Buon giorno." His expression at first was that of disagreeable surprise at being interrupted, but descending from the clouds, he rose and gave Moro a hearty

welcome, whose bad humour and canker cares seemed to have been totally dissipated, for he was radiant with smiles as he looked round the room, and praised in succession the various objects which he saw.

"The fact is," said Moro, when they were seated and served with pipes, "that a slight qualm of conscience is the motive of my visit. I have been reflecting seriously on the political matters of which we were talking, and without entirely concurring with you, I think that there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question, I hope, therefore that you will pardon the *brusquerie* of which I accuse myself, which is a natural failing, and of which I have in vain attempted to cure myself.

"*Cospetto di Dio*, my worthy friend," said Muranesi, shaking Moro cordially by the hand, and laughing at his simplicity and good nature, "do not suppose me to be so very susceptible of offence; it is by discussion alone that we arrive at truth, which, like virgin gold, is only to be got by a great deal of sifting, shaking, and washing. Some obloquy, to be

sure, is inseparable from the propounding of all great truths; the doctrine of democratic equality must ultimately triumph over every obstacle. Royalty, aristocracy, and priesthood are successively destined to succumb over all the world."

"And capital, is that to fall too?" asked Moro, with the vivacity of a man that had something to lose by such a consummation.

"Ultimately, undoubtedly too," said Muranesi; "the world has as yet altered very little since the days of Aristotle, for you recollect somebody asked in his time, if it was better to be wealthy or wise; and the answer given was, that it was better to be wealthy than to be wise, for the wise were generally to be seen hanging about the doors of the wealthy, so we must alter all that. There," continued he, pointing to thick reams of manuscript, is my *opus magnum*, entitled 'Cosmopolis,' which sets forth the model of a perfect republic, which, when completed, printed, and published, I expect to be the pedestal of my reputation with posterity, a

work embracing my entire theory of politics, of which morals form an important part, and in which I expect to give the public my mind on the antagonistic principles of the shining humility of Mentius and the *l'homme est estimé comme il s'estime* of the wretched pedants of the age of Louis the Fourteenth. With the publication of this work I hope to sound the knell of vainglory, whatever form of self-delusion it may take."

"And I see," said Moro, looking round, "that you are as much an antiquary as a philosopher. Your intellect is, certainly, a rare and singular union of diverse capabilities."

"In matters of antiquity," said Muranesi, smiling with satisfaction, "I may have some little taste. Wait a moment, I will show you something curious in that way," and going to a shelf at the other end of the room, brought forth an ancient mace, with a crimson velvet cover to the handle. "This," said Muranesi, "is the mace of Khomaruiah, the son of Touloun, of whose palace at El Katae no trace remains; and what is most curious is, that my ancestors

having been Marquises or Counts of the March in the time of Charlemagne, one of them was, a century later, sent on an embassy to the King of Ethiopia, in the time of Khomaruiah, and must have been presented at his court in the time of all its magnificence, of which the negro guards, with their casques of shining steel,—the gigantic chamberlains and porters, —the tame lions, with silver collars round their necks,—and the fountain of quicksilver glistening in the moon-light, are renowned in history."

"How surprising!" said Moro, who had heard that the grandfather of Muranesi was a porter on the quay of Venice.

"Do not suppose," said Muranesi, "that I make this remark in a spirit of vainglory, or from any motive but that of genuine love of historical research. My ancient descent was discovered in a very curious manner. One of our Antiquarian Society fell into pecuniary difficulties, and recollecting that he had seen something in the archives of the ducal palace, throwing light on my descent, was so indus-

trious in tracing my true ancestry, and developing the important part they played in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, that I gave him a stipend to prosecute his researches, and from one source to another he traced my ancestors back to the ninth century, and so full of enthusiasm was my antiquary, and so fully persuaded that I was descended from the famous Publius Augustulus Muranus, who so distinguished himself at the siege of Aquileia, that motives of delicacy towards the old families of the republic made me rest satisfied with an origin among the *incunabula* of chivalry, *nempe*, all before *anno* one thousand of the vulgar era."

"I am sure," said Moro, "that your father and grandfather had no conception of the glory of your ancestry."

"No, said Muranesi, "my father had no taste for historical research, and, poor man! was not very bright, and would have thought money thrown away if employed in the salary of an antiquary, who must make many costly trips hither and thither to complete his proofs."

"How delighted my niece will be to hear all these curious particulars!" said Moro.

"Indeed," said Muranesi, smiling with internal satisfaction; "the fact is, that when la Signora Melusina is mentioned, a delicacy, a constitutional shyness, always prevents me from alluding to the manner in which even the mention of her name affects me."

"That is to me incomprehensible," said Moro; "constitutional shyness! for why, and for what? Are we on so distant or ceremonious terms, that you should feel any such delicacy?"

"My worthy friend," said Muranesi, "your engaging openness and cordiality embolden me to ask you a plain question, What is your opinion of love? Is it an affection of the vapours of the brain that acts on the nerves, muscles, and glands of the body, or is it a physical infection, which interpenetrates the moral nature of man? Is it an illusive pleasure which marriage dissolves, or is it a pain of which marriage is the cure?"

"I rather think," said Moro, "that it is a pain, of which marriage is the cure."

"Then," said Muranesi, "I am not in love with Signora Melusina."

"No?" said Moro, off his guard, with a look of unfeigned surprise.

"No," said Muranesi, "not if love be a pain, for every time I am in her company, I experience the most exquisite pleasure from hearing her voice, and from seeing her person, —so that, when I inadvertently overturned a cup of coffee, and scalded her foot, and, on another occasion, allowed the cinder to drop off my chibouque and burn a hole in her gown, the expression of her momentary displeasure, however severe in the abstract, had yet relatively, to my state of mind, something in it irresistibly sweet, graceful, exquisite, and tender, so that memory frequently recalls them—although, in my model republic, young women are to be enjoined contempt for fine clothes, and even children are to be inured to bear pain with indifference,—as far as their *jejûne* faculties allow, for I am not so utopian or unpractical as to propose a nice compromise of the synthesis of nature with the antithesis of philosophy, at

that tender age. But, to resume our subject, it is clear that if love be a pain, of which marriage is the cure, that I cannot be in love, but under some spell of ideal perfection and moral beauty."

"Nevertheless," said Moro, "it is quite possible that I may be entirely mistaken, and that love is not a pain but a pleasure, such as you describe; and as to the operations of the brain, the nerves, and the muscles, I know no more of them than the man in the moon; for instance, I once thought that I had a sprain in my ankle, and looking into the Jesuits' manual of domestic medicine, saw that the best cure was to put the foot in cold water; but my complaint was in reality rheumatism, and the remedy made it worse: so that I had a rheumatic fever all through my limbs,—hence it is probable that you are deeply in love."

"I almost think so too," said Muranesi.

"Not a doubt of it," said Moro, in the greatest good humour.

"I have not the least doubt of it," said Muranesi; "and the highest form of love, that

which truly raises human nature to the rank of the demigod, is the platonic; and in second series, vol. iii., book iv., chap. xxxiv. of my 'Model Republic,' I have, with a view to human perfectibility, recommended its adoption."

"Your plan," said Moro, with some symptoms of impatience, "is certainly the way to have neither sins nor sinners; and the only objection I find to it is, that unless Adam and Eve be raised from the dead to recommence the business of the world, the conclusion of your experiment would be a general depopulation."

"My dear sir, do not be so warm and hasty," said Muranesi; "I recommend only a partial experiment to correct the highly artificial state into which mankind has fallen by congregating in towns and villages. Allow me to read you one chapter by way of specimen."

"Do, do, my dear sir; there is a good soul; and pardon my warmth of manner—the subject is excessively interesting. I am full of anxiety to hear how you treat it," said Moro.

"No subject can possibly be more interest-

ing," said Muranesi, with delight, and, pleased to get a listener, went with alacrity to the ponderous reams of manuscript, and pulling out a sheaf of leaves, cleared his throat with a loud hem, and began to read.

" Very good, indeed," said Moro, after a short time; " but the matter is so condensed, and at the same time so suggestive, that I intreat you to desist in order to give me time to digest what I have already heard."

Muranesi desisted, the analysis of the passion of love was resumed, and after much *quid pro quo*, Moro at length wriggled himself into a set of premises from which a matrimonial alliance between Signor Muranesi and Signora Melusina was a perfectly logical deduction. In short, Signor Muranesi was accepted as husband of Melusina by her uncle, and in return accepted, without hesitation, a bill for a considerable sum, which saved Moro from bankruptcy, and laid the foundation of pecuniary embarrassments, from which Muranesi never shook himself altogether clear.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BURSTING OF THE BUBBLE.

We must now return to Sheikh Said and his dupe the Emir Yahia, for the former individual was now embarked in the full current, not only of the darkest schemes of treachery, but pressing circumstances had for some time back been driving him down the inclined plane of reckless waste and extravagance towards acts of low swindling, henceforward incompatible with the thin gauze of respectability in which he had managed to envelope his earlier and more refined deceptions.

Not long after the marriage of his son, he saw the Emir Yahia enter his outer garden with a figure who requires a little description. His countenance was of the true Mongolian type,

with high cheek bones, eyes with the corners turned up, and a few hairs on his chin instead of a beard; this was a Chinese Moslem who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, through Tartary and Persia, and was now on a visit of curiosity to Cairo, the Emir Yahia having renewed acquaintance with him. The Emir Yahia saluted Sheikh Said coldly on entering; but Sheikh Said, although not overjoyed at his company, received both with his usual overflowing courtesy.

"Why have you been so long of coming to see me?" said Sheikh Said; "this was not kind of you, Emir. Go," said he to the gardener, "and tell Abou Ali to bring chibouque and coffee; and you, my Chinese friend, what do you say to my garden: have you anything of this sort in China?"

"Not of this sort," said the Chinese, in pure elegant Arabic as regards diction, but with a funny pronunciation; all his r's resembling l's: "we have gardens in China; but instead of this regularity we have artificial wildernesses."

"And have you many Moslems in that strange country of yours?" said Sheikh Said.

"Not a few," said the Chinese, "as you may guess by the circumstance that we have eighteen thousand mosques in the country."

"Then you have complete toleration?" said Sheikh Said.

"In China we hold the doctrine, that the business of a government is with the actions and not with the belief of men."

But the Emir Yahia showed no disposition to discuss such abstruse questions; and turning to Sheikh Said, told him that he wished to have some private conversation with him, and the gardener was sent to take the Chinese and show him the curiosities of the place, including a water-wheel of a new construction (not paid for), which Sheikh Said had induced a pilgrim to put up for him.

"Well, what news of the advancement of our affairs?" said Yahia, looking at Sheikh Said with a keen and not over friendly glance.

"Patience—patience, Emir, things are not yet at the crisis, but all goes well—put your

trust in me ; but a little patience and the Emir Yahia will declare that Sheikh Said has rendered him an essential service."

"But I tell you, frankly," said the Emir Yahia, "that the web of my patience is nearly spun out, and I expect an immediate result—if not, refund the sums I have given you, and let me have back the diamond hilted dagger. I first gave you all my disposible cash—I then borrowed more on the strength of my own name and the Emir Ghaleb, and, lastly, you got my dagger, that has been in our family for generations."

"Ah, worthy Emir, why fret and fume in this way? all your expenses will be made up to you by the Shereef of Mecca, and the great men there. Surely the Ghalebs, Shehabs, and Yahias, will not let you be a fuddah out of pocket."

"No," said the Emir Yahia, "if I go back like a fool, without having effected anything, the loss will be entirely mine ; and I wish to know, am I or am I not, to have any tangible result of my mission?"

"You do not know these people," said

Sheikh Said,—"they imagine that you have still something to give, and that you are not yet sucked dry,—the money has been laid out, both carefully and cautiously. Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey have been led to believe that there is honour and glory to be gained in protecting Mecca against those pretended reformers of Islamism; but as for your getting back either the dagger or the money, that is impossible; these persons will continue in your interest; but if you expose them, or breathe a word to any human being of what you have given, they will, to save themselves, turn round against you, and, assuredly, make Cairo too hot for you. Take my advice, lie on your oars, and be patient. I now see my way clearly, and can point out to you how we can make up for all past failures."

"You have been equally confident and plausible all along," said Yahia, his bronzed brow clouded with doubts. "I begin to lose faith in your influence—you will excuse my frankness."

"The balance-sheet of our accounts," said Sheikh Said, pretending to something like the

glow of honest warmth, "is soon made up; Ibrahim Bey is disposed to you through his secretary; Morad Bey's secretary is delighted with the present of the diamond dirk."

"And so he may," said Yahia, with a grin of bitterness.

"There is only one thing," said Sheikh Said, lowering his voice, — "one thing more," added he, with a sort of shame-faced hesitation, — "Hafiz Bey — you have no doubt heard of Hafiz Bey, an influential member of the divan — he must be gained through his secretary Bahram Effendi, — but," added Sheikh Said, seeking to read the Emir Yahia's face, and feel his way as he advanced, "it is only a matter of a few purses."

"A few purses!" said Yahia, opening eyes and mouth, and laying down the pipe with which he had been served. "When I gave you my dagger I told you that I had no more money, and now, when the affair ought to have been settled, you open up a vista of further donations, and no doubt that, in the end, I shall be as far from my object as ever. Sheikh

Said — Sheikh Said," added the Emir, with a severe look, "talk no further in this strain, or we part at once. I see how it is. I must open up all the matter to Nasif Bey, and ask his advice."

"Follow your own courses," said Sheikh Said, with perfect *nonchalance*, "but let me tell you," added he, smiling sourly in the face of the Emir, "that if Nasif Bey finds out that you have been engaged in all those tortuous intrigues without his privity, you will see what a Circassian is when he is in a passion, and that a mad dog or a wild bull is mildness in comparison; and when his fume is all over, you will just mismanage the whole business by mixing Nasif Bey in it at the very crisis."

At this moment who should Sheikh Said see, to his great annoyance, but Osman Effendi, the secretary of Ibrahim Bey, so he quickly sought a diversion by calling out to the Chinese to come hither, in order that he might make him and Osman acquainted, so that the presence of a third party might prevent the conversation taking an inconvenient turn.

"And what news in town?" said Sheikh Said, with a wink to Osman, as much as to say that least said was soonest mended on the subject of the bribes uselessly given.

"I passed by the Walys after I came out of mosque," said Osman, "and saw such a number of curious and valuable articles found on the premises of a receiver of theft; one of which articles was a dagger, with a curious old blade, with Cufic characters."

"And diamonds at the end of the handle?" said the Emir Yahia.

"Precisely so," said Osman Effendi, from whom Sheikh Said had kept the affair of the dagger a secret for his own private perquisite.

"There is no power but in God Almighty," said Yahia;—"my own dagger I will be bound."

"Are you sure?" said Sheikh Said, with a forced laugh: "many daggers have diamonds."

"What! was it your dagger?" said Osman Effendi.

"Yes, mine," said Yahia.

"And stolen from you?" said Osman.

"Without doubt, stolen from me," said Yahia, giving a look to Sheikh Said.

"Ho! there is our China man," said Sheikh Said.—"Can you speak Chinese, Osman Effendi? Our friend here has come all the way from the Great Wall of China."

"No," said the Chinese, with a grave countenance; and taking up Sheikh Said, literally, "I come from Talifo, in the province of Yunang, a town of seventy thousand inhabitants, with a garrison of four thousand soldiers: so far from the Great Wall that we are quite at the south-west of China, a beautiful place, near a lake, with nineteen mountains overhanging the lake, and a rivulet or gully between each mountain."

Osman Effendi, the taciturn man of office, observed successively the settled discomposure of the Emir Yahia, the forced vivacity of Sheikh Said, with his swollen dissipated morning eyes, and the simple Chinese *savant*, with his oddly inverted visual angles, and felt much difficulty in restraining a smile.

"And who discovered the thief?" said the Emir Yahia.

"A Jew, called Soliman," said Osman Effendi.

"Have you any Jews in China?" said Sheikh Said to the Chinese.

"Yes," said the Chinese, with alacrity, and ready to make anything he knew available for the general instruction. "In the province of Honan there are three hundred Jews—there were formerly many more, but they are gradually becoming Mushreekeen,* like the other Chinese."

"If they exchanged Judaism for the detestable doctrine of partnership in divinity," said the Emir Yahia, rising to go, "it was, perhaps, because they judged Islamism by the laxity of the practice of its professors, rather than by the purity of its doctrines." On this he saluted Osman Effendi, and was moving away, when Sheikh Said, with a great show of politeness, followed him towards the door; when Yahia

* Literally those who impose a partnership of divinity on God in opposition to the Unitarian doctrine of Islamism.

turned round and told him in a whisper, that he was the prince of impostors and swindlers.

Sheikh Said heard this with great coolness and equanimity, and then said,—

"Emir Yahia, let me offer you the best advice that you can get in Cairo. Do not say a word of this to Nasif Bey for your own sake; you are unskilled and inexperienced in the way in which affairs are carried on in this country—do not tarry long here, but make the best of your way back to Mecca."

"You thousand fold impostor!" said the Emir, who forthwith quitted the garden in high dudgeon, and took the way to the Birket-el-Fyl.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BUFFALO DAIRY.

Next day the Emir Yahia found himself, on awaking, in a most pitiable condition. He had failed in his mission, had been swindled and robbed, and yet dared not, from his complicity, expose the deceiver without exposing himself; and his mind, acting upon his body, his temples throbbed with a violent headache, for which the Chinese, who paid him an early morning visit, had given him a remedy, as he practised physic with some success.

When in this state, a visitor, his turban rolled up like one of the Ulema, or learned men in Cairo, made his appearance.

"How are you, my friend?" said he to the new comer

"Well," said Sheikh Hamood, who ever since the affair of the Long Garden had been decent in his demeanour and violent in his abuse of infidels and wine-bibbers.

"And how is my worthy friend Sheikh Cassim?" said the Emir.

"Very low," said Sheikh Hamood; "he cannot recover his spirits and his appetite; otherwise he would be delighted to see you oftener."

"I am in a very bad way myself," said the Emir Yahia; "my head at this moment aches most violently, and I would do anything to be relieved."

"*Owih!*" said Sheikh Hamood, "that is soon accomplished.

"I have administered a medicine," said the Chinese, "which in a short time will infallibly take effect."

"*Owih*," said Sheikh Hamood, with abrupt confidence, and a contemptuous look towards the Chinese. "You have only to take a nail and drive it into the tree at the Buffalo Dairies close at hand here, and you will be cured at once."

At this the Chinese was somewhat exasperated, and said,—

"Our land is famous, above all others, for two sciences, medicine and astronomy; and I have the utmost doubt of your prescription having the slightest success."

"What! you doubt the Buffalo Dairy," said Sheikh Hamood; "let the Emir put me to the proof at once."

"Well," said the Emir, "I will give the Buffalo Dairies a trial," on which Sheikh Hamood provided himself with a hammer and nail, and went forthwith, accompanied by the Emir and the Chinese, to the *Zereebeh*, at the foot of the Castle of Dogs, where amid the strong odour from the surrounding dairies, are a few trees within a walled court, and close to the tomb of Sheikh-el-Beidah, the son of one of the heroes of Islamism, grew the celebrated tree, which is supposed to have such sanative properties; and the trunk of which is as thickly studded with nails as the *Stock-am-Eisen* in Vienna; and no sooner had the Emir Yahia paid his fee and knocked in the nail, than the most violent fit of

sickness seized upon him, so that the keeper of the sanctuary declared that the power of the Sheikh's tree had never manifested itself in so potent a manner: the Emir Yahia nodding affirmatively with piteous countenance, and grasping the mud plaster of the wall so convulsively as to make it peel off.

"*Owih!*" said Sheikh Hamood, "who doubts the tree now?"

"The medicine that I gave has done it," said the Chinese, with some spite,—"it is the medicine."

"Medicine! you scoundrel!" said the fee-taker.—"I see by your ugly face that you are an infidel. What! the wearer of a turban throws doubt on the sacraments of the only true religion!—out upon the infidel!"

On this he caught hold of the lap end of the turban of the Chinese, who having not an atom of physical courage, ran out in a fright, leaving his unrolled white turban streaming behind him; but Sheikh Hamood having brought him back, restrained the impetuosity of the tree-keeper, helped the Chinese to wind up his

turban again, and promptly insisted on being made the arbiter appointed by both parties to make up the difference. He therefore decided that the Chinese should pay a penalty of the usual fee for the affront, and that there the matter should end; which, was very grudgingly acceded to by the Chinese; the Emir Yahia being still in the condition to take no part in the conversation. The pious tree-keeper no sooner pocketed the fee than he cordially begged pardon of the Chinese, and seizing hold of him, kissed him on both cheeks, on which they all returned to the Birket-el-Fyl.

The Emir Yahia now placed himself on his divan in a recumbent posture, and relieved but exhausted in body, was low in spirits, as Nasif Bey, hearing of his illness, entered the room to inquire for him, and he now resolved to make as clean a breast as he could, and take the advice of Nasif Bey.

"The body is a small matter," said Yahia, "compared to the mind;—the utter non-success of my affair cuts me to the heart. I have de-

ceived myself and deceived others: all is entangled."

"Nothing is entangled," said Nasif Bey, "to those who know the secret of disentangling."

"Nothing?" said the Emir Yahia, with a groan and a return of squeamishness and its attendant grimace.

"First of all," said Nasif Bey, "can you be confided in?"

"Betray your confidence?" said Yahia, somewhat offended.

"And all this chaffering and dealing with Sheikh Said," said Nasif Bey, laying down his pipe, and looking at the Emir with an arch patronizing air.

"Sheikh Said?" said Yahia, taken aback; for he counted on opening the affair himself to Nasif.

"Yes, Sheikh Said," said Nasif, with a semi-malicious smile.—"Do you suppose I have not had a pretty shrewd guess of what has been going on, and I knew how it would end. In short, you have given your money and have been bubbled—had you candidly told me the

truth, I could have saved you all your money and the annoyance to boot: you have had to do with one of the most ingenious impostors in Cairo."

"By Allah! my brother," said the Emir, "I beg a thousand times pardon for my seeming want of confidence;—you yourself told me that your influence was low, and he made magnificent promises of what he could do, on condition of secrecy, and my having given my promise unguardedly on this head, was my only motive for not speaking sooner."

"Well, now that your money is gone, and the business undone, are you willing to have back your money, although it should cost Sheikh Said everything in his house, from the floor to the roof? Are you willing to carry through your scheme of defending the Holy Cities? Are you, in short, willing to return to Mecca, not poorer, but richer than when you came, and not a defeated but a successful envoy?"

"Ask the thirsty man if he will drink cool water; the weary, if he will rest under the sycamore; or the naked, if he will be clothed,"

said the Emir Yahia. "I saw Sheikh Said yesterday, and the scoundrel told me, after getting all my money, that the best thing I could do, would be to go back to Mecca again."

"And I tell you the same thing," said Nasif Bey, "unless you are prepared for a venture — life and limb must be risked," continued he, lowering his voice.

"I am ready for anything," said the Emir, "for I have no more money to risk, and if the Wahabys enter Mecca, life and limb are of no use to the Emir Yahia."

"Then it is clearly understood," said Nasif Bey, "that whether you embark in my scheme or not, you will do nothing to mar it."

"As clearly understood," said Yahia, "as it would be if it were attested at the Caaba itself."

"Well," said Nasif, "bethink you a little of the political conditions of this poor country. The Government of the Castle," said Nasif, "has many sins to answer for — do not suppose that yours is an isolated case — thousands are looking forward to the moment of deliverance.

All the Ulema and superior classes of Cairo are disgusted with the pride of Morad Bey. The middle classes are ruined in their trade by exactions. Many of the old and energetic Mamelukes of Ali Bey, as well as those who were in favour with Mohammed his successor, are anxious for a change; and, as regards your prospects, a good understanding between the Porte and the Government of Egypt would at once place the Holy Cities in safety. Now, if Nasif Bey sat in the Castle instead of Morad, what answer do you suppose he would give to your request for co-operation and assistance?"

"The answer of a true Moslem," said the Emir Yahia.

"No doubt," said Nasif Bey.

"And when and where is the blow to be struck?" asked the Emir Yahia.

"Hussein Pasha has invited you, along with the other members of the Divan, to dine with him the day after to-morrow; and, towards the conclusion of the entertainment, we must manage to get out of the way, and leave the

men to settle accounts with Morad and Ibrahim and their party."

"A violation of hospitality? Nay," said the Emir Yahia, "that may be Turkish manners, but not Arab. What would be said of a scion of the house of Yahia lending himself to treachery?"

"Well," said Nasif, "such an opportunity of settling your business will never occur again. All responsibility is taken away from you, for the feast is given not in your house but in the Castle. All that I want you to do, is to give me unlimited power and authority over your men for one day; but let there be no halting and wavering at the time of execution. If there is to be a drawing back, draw back now; and if you are content with the present posture of affairs at the Castle and the prospects of Arabia, let us never allude to the subject again."

"If you can steer me clear of all responsibility, relative to the breach of hospitality," said the Emir Yahia, with considerable compunctions of conscience, "I consent to all you

ask, for it is a shame that such self-seeking swine should have power and authority in the land of Egypt."

"Very good," said Nasif; "you are now poorly, but if you are better towards evening we shall arrange the details. Would you like me to send you our most celebrated Frank physician?"

"A Cafir?" asked the Emir Yahia.

"Cafir or no Cafir, he is renowned for his skill," said Nasif Bey.

"I would rather not," said the Emir Yahia, who was quite satisfied with the efficacy of the nail.

Nasif Bey then returned to his own apartment, and impatiently awaited the fourth hour of the night, when he slipped from his private room into the small garden, in which the Kiosk was situated, and in a short time the Dervish entered, and they saluted each other in whispers.

"And how go on our affairs?" said the Dervish, as they seated themselves in the covered arbour, through the openings of which

the rays of a waning moon glistened dimly on the high drab-coloured felt hat of the Dervish.

"As well as can be expected," said Nasif Bey; "the Emir Yahia is thoroughly disgusted with Morad and Ibrahim, and with the whole world except ourselves and the Pasha; and as the presence of a large number of my Mamelukes would excite suspicion, the few men that he has with him will prove useful."

"But will he not peach to Sheikh Said?" said the Dervish.

"That affair," said Nasif Bey, "has been settled nicely by Sheikh Said himself, who has proved to the Emir Yahia, as he has done to all the world, the most consummately plausible and successful man in making friends by his words and address, and turning them into enemies by his actions. The Emir Yahia would have no objections to see his wind-pipe slit."

"And what is the plan that you have settled upon?" said the Dervish.

To despatch the two Beys and their immediate people, on a preconcerted signal, and to send my Mamelukes and effect a junction with

those of the Ali Bey party to seize the gate. You may tell the Pasha that all is matured, but let there be no mistake about the signal; what is it to be?"

"A large piece of pastry is to be presented during the entertainment, and, on the crust being broken, a live dove, which it contains, will fly out, and seek escape through the open window, and while the Beys are following it with their eyes, we will all rise by way of being amused, and the fun may commence."

"Dervish, you are an Afreet," said the Bey, not at all shocked at the proposed cool blooded murder. "How many of such dinners have you seen in your life."

"Never but one," said the Dervish, hastily, and changing the subject, added, "supposing we are quite successful in overthrowing the present government, how do you propose to proceed? Does the Porte re-enter purely and simply into the possession of Egypt?"

"There are," said Nasif Bey, "difficulties about concluding this matter all at once. Let the Pasha once more hold the reins of power

for the Porte, and use the well-disposed Beys as justly and reasonably as his own barb, and you will see that he will arrive satisfactorily at his journey's end; but we are discussing how the government of Egypt is to be carried on, as if we were sitting masters in the Castle of Cairo. Methinks we are somewhat hasty."

"True," said the Dervish, and after some further conversation, he was let out at the same door by which he had entered.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BLOODY BANQUET.

On the following forenoon Nasif Bey's palace was full of bustle in preparation for the progress of the Emir Yahia, accompanied by many persons. The Emir wore a dirk with a large diamond in it, lent him by Nasif Bey. The latter was in full dress, wearing a costume of the finest crimson English cloth, profusely embroidered with gold, and mounted his horse of massive barrel, of a whitish grey colour, and the sleekest coat; while that of the Emir was a jet black Dongola of finer limbs. Their saddles were of purple velvet, and the bridles of woven silk, the silver ornaments of which kept jingling as the chargers stamped their feet with impatience to start, tossed their heads and foamed at the mouth.

At length the procession being marshalled with due decorum started for the castle, passing up the steep Derb-el-Habbaleh, where as the name denotes, ropes of palm fibres, were displayed in the shops and in which street is the fountain of Kaid Bey, a lofty square edifice, which is probably the finest specimen of inlaid architectural elevation in existence. It was even then considerably the worse for the progress of time, but with the intense ultra marine of the lapis lazuli, with which it is enamelled, the European spectator seems to see a colossal table of Florentine *Pietra commessa* turned over from the horizontal to the perpendicular. The procession then passed into the Roumeyleh and entered the castle, and Nasif Bey asked himself internally, who was likely to hold the gate that evening? Hope answered in a flattering manner, that the party of Nasif Bey had, by sunset, a much better chance of commanding its keys and hinges, its pulleys and portcullis, than that of Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey.

The ascent was steep, and both Nasif Bey's

charger and the Emir's Dongola horse were breathing hard, when they got up to the plateau above, whence they saw the whole city stretched out before them, with the red and white minarets like rooks and pawns on a chess-board, and passing the last gate, entered the spacious court-yard, which was crowded with the horses and grooms of the Mameluke Beys and their underlings, in gala costume. Here they dismounted, and ascending the great stair-case, and passing through spacious corridors, at length arrived at the grand divan of the Pasha, in the ante-chamber of which was a crowd of attendants of various sorts, for the most part armed; and two men drawing aside the curtain, they entered a long and lofty apartment, of no great width, with a divan of dark blue cloth and gold tassels — and the roof carved into diamond compartments, with gilt knobs in the centre of each.

The Pasha was at the other end of the room, next the window, and on each side of him was a numerous company, invited for the occasion — the Cadi, the Muftis of the rites

of Hanifeh, Shafei, Malek, and Hambaleh.* Lower down on the divan was Sheikh Said, who had the impudence to salute the Emir Yahia in the most gracious manner, but received no better return than if he had sowed corn in the desert environs of Mecca. On the other hand, Morad Bey, and Ibrahim Bey were, on their

* Four subdivisions are recognisable within the bosom of the great Moslem family, called Sunnite, in opposition to the so-called Shiites; for simplicity's sake and the convenience of those romance readers, who are not supposed to be scholars, it may be as well to mention that while the Persians and other Shiites recognized the Imamate of the successors of Ali, the Turks, Arabs, &c., hold by what they call the orthodox rite of Abou Bekr and the true Caliphate or succession of the houses of Omeia and Abbas. Within this latter family, the recognised doctors of law, usage, and custom, were the four individuals who give name to the Muftis mentioned above. The sect of Hanifeh being that of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire: all the Cadis that go from the college of Ulema and Constantinople belong to it. The interpretations of Shafei have been, with few exceptions, always the rule for the Muftis of Egypt and Syria. Morocco and the Barbary coast usually adhere to the sect of Malek, while that of Hambaleh has the fewest votaries, but includes the once populous and still important city of Bagdad as well as a considerable part of the vale of the Tigris, and, strange to say, the Moslem population of Nablouse, the capital of Samaria, in Palestine, where they are quite surrounded by the rite of Shafei.

arrival, received by the Pasha with a crescendo of smiles and compliments.

"And why," said Ibrahim Bey, after he was served with a diamond-mounted pipe, "do you Sheikh Said never come to see me?"

"Ha! what do you care about Ulema and books of law!" said Sheikh Said.

"*Hai, hai!*" said the Pasha's jester, a short middle-aged man, with shabby clothes and a dissipated look, "the only books that Ibrahim Bey cares about, are those that show who is in arrear with the land-tax. Come, Osman Effendi, is that not true?"

But Osman Effendi, who covered intrigue, gluttony, and avarice, by a diligent attention to business, and an exterior of taciturn respectability, continued to smoke, without even looking at the jester.

"*Hai, hai!*" said the jester, "his mouth was made for eating and not for speaking."

"Osman Effendi," said the Pasha, "digests well in more ways than one—he says little, but thinks a great deal."

"Well," said the jester, "that is odd, for I

am quite the contrary. I think little and say a great deal, and yet my digestion is good."

Osman Effendi still gave no answer, but looking contentedly at his own fat paunch, satisfied himself with thanking and saluting the Pasha, by raising his hand to his brow and resuming his pipe.

The musicians in the lower part of the room now began to play, which interrupted the general conversation, and each began to talk to his neighbour.

"You hear," said the Arnaout Aga to the Dervish, who sat next him, "the Pasha is telling Yahia of the good intelligence which reigns between him and Morad Bey."

"I heard," said the Dervish, "but what amused me was, Nasif Bey declaring that this would be the last day of his enmity to Morad Bey."

"Did he not speak the truth?" whispered the Arnaout Aga to his interlocutor: "hatred is never carried to the abode of contempt, and 'better a living dog than a dead lion,' saith the proverb."

"Do you go in to dinner with the grandees?" said the Dervish.

"No," said the Aga, "I am not of the rank, and besides must be ready to do my business."

"Are all your men prepared?" whispered Sheikh Said to Osman Effendi.

"Every man," answered the latter. "You see how Nasif Bey's head nods to the music—it will soon nod to something else."

Dinner was now announced, and the company having previously had their hands washed, passed into a large room, at the other side of the corridor, where an ample repast was provided. A tall gigantic Bosniac, six feet four inches English in height, and stout in proportion, but his face much marked with small-pox, stood behind the Pasha, well armed, but with his hands crossed, and doing nothing, was a sort of Eastern henchman to the giver of the feast, while an almost interminable procession of Turkish dishes made their appearance, which were no sooner tasted than sent away again, the honour to a visitor being shown by the

number of dishes, the decuple of what is necessary.

When the dinner was nearly over, the Pasha, rising, said that he would return immediately, and he was no sooner gone, than a large piece of pastry was brought in, which was handed to the Emir Yahia to break; the Emir, however, was disappointed and vexed at the disappearance of the Pasha; his hand shook and trembled, but at length, under the influence of a severe look from Nasif Bey, he pulled out the dirk, and lifting up the crust, a dove flew out and fluttered about the room. A haze came over his eyes as the Arnaout was seen advancing to the door, along with his men and those of the Yahia, but before they could enter the room, the door was shut in their face, and all entrance barred, while, on the other side, a door was opened, and the room was in a few minutes filled with the men of Morad Bey, while a loud scuffle and pistol-shots were heard on the other side of the door that had been shut in the face of Nasif Bey and the Emir Yahia's men.

"Here is treachery," said Nasif, rising up suddenly, and drawing his sword, while all the rest of the party stood asunder.

"Treachery, indeed!" said Morad Bey, significantly; "such a word comes with a peculiar force from Nasif Bey. *Hai, hai!* Nasif Bey, did I not tell you, that the friendly feelings that you entertained towards me would be requited to you."

Meanwhile, the struggle and exchange of pistol-shots continued, on the other side of the door, so as to make a deafening noise. Yahia, pale as death, was unable to support the look of Morad Bey, much less attempt to cut his way through. Nasif Bey saw at a glance that there was no prospect of success, and gave up his sword to save his life from being taken on the spot. Presently, the shots on the other side of the great door ceased, and a Mameluke of Morad Bey entering, told him that the revolters were all hewn down,—on which the great door was opened, and the first thing that met the sight of those inside, was the dead body of the Aga of Arnaouts stretched

on the ground, and a pool of crimson blood standing in repulsive relief to the white polished marble of the pavement of the ante-chamber.

"Nasif Bey, the Emir Yahia, and Sheikh Said, are prisoners," said Morad Bey, with authority, and those three persons were forthwith marched off to durance vile, and the wounded men in the corridor, some of them groaning piteously, others barely recovering their consciousness, gazed with stupefaction as the Emir, the Bey, and Sheikh Said, passed them, disarmed and closely guarded.

Nasif Bey had given orders to Abdy that as soon as they should see a red flag raised to the top of the tower next Caid Bey, he should proceed with his men to the Roumeyleh, and there should attempt to seize the gate of the Janissaries. This signal was watched with much attention, from the roof of Nasif Bey's palace; it having been calculated so as exactly to suit the time for the dinner; and, accordingly, the Mamelukes of Nasif Bey were assembled, and proceeded to the Roumeyleh. To prevent attention and alarm most of them were on foot, and

proceeded from different streets, so as to converge all at once at the gate and attempt to force it—Abdy alone being on horseback to direct the proceeding. First of all, several men went at once, and going up, seized and disarmed the guard. It was then expected that the rest of the guard would rush out of the guard-house, and would find themselves overpowered by the second party appointed to follow; but no resistance being made, Ali boldly led his men through the vaulted way, and was about to ascend the steep approach inside the gate; the Mamelukes had cleared the entrance but a short way when a shower of balls from the loop-holes above laid Ali flat on the earth.

They now attempted to retreat, but Abdy, who believed the gate to be in their power, urged them on, his voice ringing through the vaulted barbican. Again they attempted to advance, when another shower of balls a second time compelled them to retire, under cover of the vault. Unable to induce the men to advance, and disdaining to retreat, Abdy did not

perceive that he stood right under the portcullis. A whirring noise was suddenly heard; and before even the Mamelukes could get out of the way, the ponderous iron-keeled door slid down like a huge guillotine, struck Abdy on the back of the neck, bent him double on his horse, and in the twinkling of an eye pinned him and his steed to the earth, the head of both horse and rider being all but severed from their bodies.

CHAPTER XVII.

LATIF BEY.

The prison to which the Emir Yahia was conveyed was one of the towers of the Castle of Cairo, on the side of the mountain called Boorg Malek-el-Ashraf, or Boorg-el-Ashraf for shortness, and in the time of the Mameluke Beys was used for the confinement of political prisoners. A small heavy iron door was here unlocked, and the Emir was taken into a large apartment, occupying all the lower part of the tower, with barred windows looking across a small court to the next tower of similar construction, which bounded the narrow parapet. Here Yahia saw an old man, with shabby genteel clothes, rise up from a carpet in some alarm; but was tranquillized when the jailer told him

that this affair did not concern him, and that it was only another prisoner who was to be added to the company.

"The room up, stairs where you are to be put, is not yet ready," said the jailer to the Emir Yahia, "as I did not expect guests; but you can wait while it is put in order."

The old man, already in the prison, then invited the Emir Yahia to be seated on his carpet, the door being locked on them, while a broom, mat, and carpet, had been sent for. Yahia saw that his fellow prisoner had been formerly a very fat man, but his flesh had fallen away with confinement, his cheeks being flabby, pouchy, and hanging about his jaws, and his paunch resting on his knees; nor was he the only inmate of the apartment, a variety of cages, with birds and beasts, were ranged along the walls; and at the unfaced barred windows were boxes of earth with a variety of plants, while a gazelle had the free range of the apartment, so that there was an attempt to get up a menagerie and a botanical garden in the prison. The gazelle came skipping forward, and was so tame

as to lick the hand of the Emir Yahia, while a black baboon, with white eye brows, gave him a most inhospitable reception, running out the length of his chain with such rapidity, that the Emir, not knowing what he intended, bent over the old prisoner so suddenly, that he would have fallen had he not been caught in his arms, the chain of the baboon preventing his farther progress.

"He is merely playful," said the old prisoner, "not vicious—he is one of my best companions, for I am allowed no visitors—and must just kill time as well as I can."

"If that be the best of your companions," thought Yahia to himself, almost overpowered by the odour of the baboon, "bad is the best."

"I congratulate myself on having your company," added the old prisoner.—"I hope to be allowed to communicate with you up stairs, but can scarcely feel that I am paying you a compliment in making you welcome to the Boorg-el-Ashraf. And what event brings you here, friend?—I have heard shots fired, and was alternately anxious and hopeful of liberation."

"I will tell you that to-morrow," said the Emir; "my affair is not yet settled, nor yet ended. My senses are overpowered; my memory confused—the events of the day seem to my fevered brain like the changes of a dream, between the borders of the real and unreal. I know not if I can count upon another day's life on the earth, for there is no escape from what is written."

"Do not be cast down," said the old man; "your being sent to this prison is of good augury and presents the probability that your life is to be spared;—but hush!"

At this moment the outer door was unbarred, and two men of sinister aspect entered, carrying a broom, mats, carpets, and a bed: and the jailer locking the door on the outside, again they proceeded up stairs.

"And what brought you here?" said the Emir Yahia.

"Too much ambition," said the old man. "I was in too great haste to build my fortunes, and lacking solid foundations and firm adhesion, the fabric came the more grievously

to ruin — mayhap you have heard of Latif Bey."

"What! the same who was with Hassan Bey in the attempt at a revolt against Morad, some years ago?"

"The same?" said the prisoner.

"And how did you get here?" said the Emir Yahia, looking painfully round at the company with which he was surrounded, and keeping his eye on the baboon, who evidently had as much antipathy to the new comer as the new comer had to him.

"Hassan Bey and I, after the failure of our plot, took refuge in the hareem of Morad Bey, and got his first wife to use all her influence with him to get us pardoned, but he was immovable and inexorable. What was to be done? the Chouse Aga of Morad Bey was waiting below our window, ready to catch us if we went out, and Hassan Bey called my attention to the fact, that the rafters that supported the projecting lattice were old and rotten, and that it was shaky—we aided it by lifting up the cloth of the divan, placed there, and cutting a portion

of the wood,—we then got friends to have horses ready in the neighbourhood, and watching an opportunity, when the Chouse Aga was right under the projecting lattice, we jumped on the seat with our joint weight, when it broke away and felled the Chouse Aga to the earth, killing him on the spot. Hassan Bey escaped, and is now at Esneh, in Upper Egypt, but I, having broken my leg, could not move, and was taken —so Morad Bey having given me my life I have been kept in this tower ever since."

"And have you got reconciled to it?" said Yahia.

"Perfectly,—the only source of unhappiness is when any of my plants die, or when any of the animals are ill. I can now tell in a moment if they are in the least ailing, and it is no less strange than true, that the illness of a pigeon in that empty palm wicker basket gave me more pain and anxiety than the failure of our plot, and when it died, I wept all day."

Yahia sighed; what a fate, thought he, a dilemma between death or endurance so vile that, like Nabuchodnasr, one is reduced to be

the companion of animals. They would have continued this conversation, but whirlwinds of dust came down stairs, from the cleaning, which set them both a-coughing, and when the mist had cleared away, Yahia remarked, that it was very cool there, almost chilly, although the sun was hot outside; but the prisoner reminded him of the great thickness of the wall.

The men now descended, and calling through the barred window to the jailer, he entered and took the Emir Yahia up to his room, which, being higher, was much lighter than the room below.

"Am I to be allowed no fresh air?" said Yahia.

"I have no orders about that," said the jailer, "but I will allow you in the morning and evening to go on the roof of the tower, with the other prisoners,—but you had better not show yourself on the parapet, for fear the privilege should be cut off."

In the evening, when the sun was setting in the west, the jailer came and found the two prisoners in the upper room, the Emir Yahia

having at last confessed, that the odour of the baboon was too powerful for him, and begged him to make the room upstairs the common parlour, to which Latif Bey acceded with pleasure, but every ten minutes was down stairs to see how the animals were getting on. The jailer then unlocked the door that led to the tower, when they ascended.

It was indeed a glorious sunset, and although the city of Cairo was in great part hid from their view by the front part of the castle— yet they had a wide view up the valley of the Nile; overlooked on the left by the steep rocks of the Gebel Gioushy, or Giant's Mountain, a precipitous part of the Mokattam chain, while the river was seen stretching far and wide to the south, in its vast curves, bordered by the broad fields of various hues, from deep green to golden yellow, and often almost lost to view by the tenuity of its waters, the inundation only beginning to feel the effects of the mid-summer rains in Abyssinia, which in a few weeks would again swell its waters to red turbid floods, covering the now dry land.

"This is glorious," said Yahia, "and one would enjoy it, if it were not for the uncertainty regarding my fate, which makes my spirits sink within me—but, fellow-prisoner, fair as it is, you must be sated and longing to leave it. What would you not give for change of scene, if it were only for a sail up to Beni Souef, or down to the Batan-el-Bakar?"

"No," said the Bey, good-humouredly, "I have got over that longing to which you allude, and I console myself by thinking that if I cannot promenade over the face of the earth, the sun, during its movement round the earth, sometimes approaching nearer, sometimes more distant, produces in one spot all the variety of change of place. As the year advances onward, I see the wide-spread crops grow more and more yellow, and the Nile shrunk to its narrowest channel. As the inundation proceeds, I mark, each day, how the waters struggle with the land and vanquish it, until what is a river seems a lake, and the sea, instead of beginning at Alexandria, might commence at the Cow's Chest (apex of the Delta). As the heat declines,

and the inundation rapidly recedes during the autumn, the earth, vanquished for a while, reasserts its authority, with the clear mild weather of winter, which is so different from the snows and chilling blasts of my native Anatolia. My father was the astronomer of the mosque of Mollah Hunkiar, in Konieh. The intervals between the palm groves are covered with the richest coats of verdure, and even at this distance the north wind never blows in early spring without its wafting hither the fragrance of a thousand bean fields on the Delta. Thus, even this prison has its moments of gladness, that seem to spring up out of the very autumnal leaves of life, and the blast of my fairest hopes, which I now and then amuse my old age with throwing into our Turkish rhyme. Involved during the greater part of my life in schemes of bloody ambition, I passed alternately from the phrenzy of power and luxury to satiety and disappointment, and strange as it may seem, the bond which has limited me to the cultivation of a few plants, the prospect from the tower, the reading of a few books, and the inditing of a few cou-

plets, seems to have enlarged my sphere of enjoyment, by the discovery of the boundless variety that lurks under nature, however minute and restricted a part of it we select."

"There is no power but in God, the High, the Great," said Yahia. "Has your sense of seeing been rendered more acute."

"Undoubtedly," said the Bey; "but I am losing my sight again by old age?"

"What is that speck, as it were, on the top of a pole," said the Emir Yahia, "on yon further tower over-looking the town? is it the skull of some malefactor, bleached white in the sun?"

The Bey looked at the object in question, and said, "It is a newly decapitated head, and put there since I was allowed to take my morning walk. That head belongs to the events of the present and not of the past, for that pole was ungarnished at sunrise."

The Emir Yahia turned away his face in evident agitation, and thought to himself, that it must be the head of Nasif Bey.

"Continue your walk, I will descend," said the Emir.

"What, so soon!" said Latif Bey.

"Excuse me," said the Emir, "I will see you again," and he forthwith descended, and in another quarter of an hour the Bey was called down by the jailer carrying the supper, and carefully locking the door that led to the upper part of the tower, he arranged the prisoner's supper; but the recollection of the events of the day, deprived the Emir Yahia of all appetite. They then descended to the lower room, where Latif Bey busied himself in feeding the various animals, and the Emir Yahia, with fits of abstraction, answered, mechanically, all the prattle of the old Bey, about his menagerie, and while this talk was going on, the bolts were unbarred, and the corpulent form of Osman Effendi was seen to enter, preceded by his servant, with a large paper lantern.

CHAPTER XVIII.

YAHIA TURNS HIS FACE TO MECCA.

"Well, Latif Bey," said Osman Effendi, as he entered, breathing hard, "how get on the plants and the animals?" and before Latif Bey could answer, he continued, "Emir Yahia, my business is with you. Well, let us go up stairs. I scent a baboon a hundred cubits off—how can any man have a baboon in his house?" concluded the Effendi, wheezing and coughing as he slowly ascended the staircase; and entering the room of the Emir Yahia, sat down on the mattress, and taking breath, said abruptly to Yahia, who stood before him, "Well, you thought you could oust Morad Bey; are you now persuaded that your schemes are impracticable? But sit you down while we talk out

the matter—you have sowed the wind, and reaped the whirlwind."

"Whatever I sowed on the soil of Osman Effendi turned out barren," said the Emir. "I gave my money, trusting to the influence of Sheikh Said and Osman Effendi; and had they had the decency to return me my money, with the assurance that they had no influence to assist me, what has happened, would never have happened."

"Sheikh Said," said Osman Effendi, "is a scoundrel with whom you were in league; but what have I had to do with your intrigues, and your schemes of treachery? Look at the thickness of these walls," continued the Effendi, looking sternly upon him, "and let me give you a few words of advice. Let not the name of Osman Effendi be pronounced to a third party, whether you have hours or years to live."

Yahia had not the nerve to reply, but modestly sat down at the other end of the mattress, as he was bidden.

"Hints and allusions of that sort," continued

Osman, "come from you with a peculiar force. An Arab is concerned in an attempt at murder on an occasion of hospitality, *Aib*, *Aib*. Oh, shame! and then he has the assurance to talk of honour. Know that it was determined to put you to death, and that your life is saved at my intercession, on condition of your confessing all that has passed between you and Nasif Bey, with an account of your other accomplices."

"Of what use?" said Yahia. "Is he not dead?"

"No," said Osman. "If he were dead, your life would be worth little."

"He has been decapitated," said Yahia.

"He has not," said Osman.

On this Yahia felt a load removed from his breast, and his first impulse (for his nature was none of the noblest) was to report in full all that had passed with Nasif Bey, for Mecca is the Jerusalem of the Moslem world, and as communities that live by the enthusiasm of pilgrims, come to look upon religion as a trade, the permanent population of Mecca has never

been very remarkable for the nobler virtues of the Arab character, and their worldliness contributed as largely to the Wahaby movement, as the vices of an Alexander the Sixth, or the epicurean indulgences of a Leo, to the disruption of the Latin church; but the pride of the Emir Yahia was deeply wounded by Osman Effendi's supercilious treatment of an Arab Emir, even although in prison; and he was piqued in the most lively manner, by the recollection of the sums he had uselessly given, and which he felt, in spite of his denial, that Osman Effendi had shared, so in a fit of resentment, rather than of moral courage, he said,

"Take my head if you wish it, but I have been the guest and the friend of Nasif Bey, and I will not say a syllable against him."

"Then do not say that you are ignorant of the alternative," said Osman Effendi. "To-night the Divan of Inquiry on Nasif Bey will take place. Your complicity, as shown by the proceedings and confessions of your men, will be clearly established—your death will follow—proofs exist that this conspiracy has been

arranged at Constantinople, and nothing can save you but a full confession."

Yahia felt that it was requisite to make one effort more; he therefore rose, crushed his pipe under his heel, and said—"Though you crush my body to atoms, you will learn no more from me."

Flushed, excited, and pleased that he had succeeded in screwing up a show of courage, he sat down again, looking somewhat triumphantly at Osman Effendi; who, fearing that his share in the bribes might come out to Ibrahim, and create displeasure,—not at his having taken a bribe, but at having presumed to keep it all to himself without sharing it along with those who surrounded Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey,—was therefore desirous that the Emir Yahia should be removed.

"As for anybody in Mecca," said Osman Effendi, shifting his ground, "ever getting a single soldier from Egypt, that is quite out of the question. Your mission has failed—your life is in Morad Bey's hands; but, however, contemptible your fooling with the symbol of the

broken pipe may be, I for my own individual part, have no desire to see your blood spilt. Take my advice, throw yourself on Morad Bey's mercy; ask permission to return to Mecca; but, as a passport to his favour, make out a document implicating Sheikh Said as art and part in the conspiracy."

"Oh, the villain!" said the Emir Yahia, "that is another affair;—if only he stands between me and my safe return to Mecca, I hesitate no longer; you yourself will be the bearer of my petition to Morad Bey; and as for Sheikh Said, tell me what I have to do or to say, and it is at your service."

"Well," said Osman Effendi, "suppose you sign this?" and taking out a piece of paper, and drawing his pen-and-ink case from his girdle, he wrote out a statement to the effect, that Sheikh Said was the concoctor of the plot, which was unhesitatingly signed by Yahia. Osman Effendi then went away and returned in about an hour, saying—"Your life, Emir Yahia, has been granted, and you are to leave Cairo instanter, with a person attached to Morad

Bey, who is in waiting below to take you to the khan of the Emir Yezbek, where you will find transport for Suez, by which port you may return to the Hedjas by the first vessel that offers."

"Selim Aga," cried the Effendi, "come forward."

On this Selim Aga presented himself; the same, it may be remembered, who had headed the mutiny, at the island of Rodah, against Ahmed Aga Arnaout, since which period he had been in intelligence with the underlings of Morad and Ibrahim Bey. He had assisted to disarm the party of the Emir Yahia and the other Arnaouts at the door of the banqueting-room, and was now and henceforth to be in the immediate suite of Ibrahim Bey. He looked as ruffianly as ever, and the Emir Yahia did not like his heavy brows. His voice was now so hoarse from debauchery that he spoke in a perfect whisper, and was obliged to help himself out with gestures; but his dress was magnificent, as he had coolly appropriated to himself a portion of the clothes worn by the now defunct Ahmed Aga; the jacket of crimson

velvet, embroidered with gold, was much too small; but Selim Aga could not deny himself the pleasure of figuring in the finery of the dead man.

They all now descended to the room below; and the old Bey, so long a prisoner, was disagreeably surprised on learning that Yahia was to quit so soon. The Emir embraced him, and said to Osman, that he hoped his liberation was not far off; but Osman Effendi told him drily, that he had best think of his own affairs. Yahia then begged that some one might be sent to Nasif Bey's house to bring away his things, and get the rest of his men to go home with him; but Osman said,—"I have no order on that score; no one knows that you leave Cairo, and it is the wish of the Bey that you leave it as quietly as possible. An hour after midnight, when the festival is well through, you will start."

So saying, Osman turned and departed, leaving the Emir Yahia and Selim Aga, who an hour after midnight took their departure.

The horses were waiting, and they descended to the town; as they passed the Bab Zuei-

leh, the spot recalled to the Emir Yahia the most painful recollections; and although the moon was pouring its floods of tender light, faintly suffused with the palest of green on the high tapering minarets of the Mosque of Moyed, so as to make it look like a creation of fairy land, yet he saw nothing and thought of nothing but the contrast of the gaiety and hope of his entrance into Cairo, and the ignominious exit he was now making from the city.

The Emir Yahia did not like the appearance of his conductor, and, as they went along, repeatedly asked himself, whether this journey was not for the purpose of getting quit of him. Himself engaged in an act of perfidy, he, like all other Orientals, thought that whom he wished to deceive might be disposed to give him like measure, forgetting that had his life been sacrificed in the castle, his death would have been considered merited; and a circumstance occurred which raised the nervousness of the Emir Yahia to a still higher pitch. When they came to the Bab Nasr, one of the northern gates of Cairo, they entered the guard-house, Selim Aga

showing an order of Ibrahim Bey, Sheikh-el-Belled, or Lord Mayor of Cairo, to allow them to pass; on which the sergeant of the guard, one Haleem Aga, a Kurd from Marash, and a very civil man, asked them in to take a cup of coffee. The guard-house is a solid vaulted place, just like a cavern, being built under the immense arch by which this part of Cairo communicates with the desert outside.

Selim Aga consented, and they entered, and Haleem Aga, while coffee was getting ready, began to admire the sabre of Selim, which was partly hilted with silver; and the Emir Yahia's attention being drawn to it, he thought that he knew it again to be the weapon of the Arnaout Aga he had often seen at Nasif Bey's. It also seemed to him, that Selim Aga wore the costume he had seen on the back of Ahmed Aga Arnaout that morning, which produced a new uneasiness in his mind, and a feeling that he was in the hands of a man of predatory habits. So when coffee was offered, the Emir Yahia opened his sash with his left hand (as he thought unperceived), and endeavoured to pass the coffee down

between his sash and waistcoat, so as to avoid being seen, as he suspected poison; but this movement was observed by one of the men sitting in the dark corner, who whispered to Haleem Aga, the sergeant of the guard, who rose very wroth, and said,—

"What! Emir, Emir, do you doubt Haleem Aga?—do you suppose that because you are a trickster yourself, all men are the same? Look at him, you Moslems; he thinks me to be a poisoner, and pours coffee between his waistcoat and girdle."

"Not possible!" said Selim Aga, laughing at the quandary of the Emir, and, going forward, put down his hand behind his girdle, and withdrew it again, damp with the warm coffee. "His girdle is like a sponge," added Selim. "Come, Emir, this is rather shabby."

"A mistake," said the Emir Yahia, in the utmost confusion.—"I avow and protest—an accidental spilling. Where is another cup of coffee?—a Kurd do anything unhandsome—impossible!—a mistake,—pardon me," said the Emir Yahia.

"Another cup of coffee," said the Kurd, turning round, "and may you never have a more unhealthy beverage than what you have had at the Gate of Succour."

The soldiers of the gate, who had been respectful at the beginning, now began to jeer at the Emir, who wished to be moving; but Selim Aga wished to sit a few minutes longer to hear them crack their coarse jokes on the Emir.

"Do you not see that his bowels are wide?" (*i.e.* that he is generous), said an old soldier with a scar on his cheek and weather-beaten countenance.—"This Emir wished to save Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey the expense of presents to the servants of the feast."

"He is generous as a butcher," said another soldier, "who feeds the sheep he is going to kill."

"Enough," said the Kurd coldly, "and let the Emir go on his way."

On this hint Selim Aga rose, and the party sallied forth in the moon-light towards the place where the camels were waiting, when the Emir having mounted, departed on his way to Suez, and Selim Aga returned back to Cairo.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOME OF MELUSINA.

The house of Signor Moro adjoined a pleasure-ground, which still exists under the name of Gheyt Roshitto, or the Garden of Rosetti, which is surrounded with mansions, and forms a considerable open space in this crowded city. The house was originally one of considerable magnificence, as was shown by the wide flight of steps, which, on the side next the garden, led up to an arcade of round stilted arches with octagonal columns; the roof of each of the loggie formed apparently into something like wheels of fortune, but looking more closely, they proved to be sentences of the Koran disposed in this manner, thus showing that, although now

occupied by a Christian, its builder had been a Moslem.

On the day of the dinner the table was laid out in this arcade, under the direction of Madame Moro, a lady then between fifty and sixty years of age, whose person was the reverse of that of her husband, for he was short in stature, bulky in body, and ruddy in countenance, while she was tall, meagre, and shrivelled. She had no issue, and had turned devout after a life of gallantry; although never without a rosary in her hand, she had not made up her mind to renounce the rouge pot, and, pale as death in the morning, her roses invariably budded in the course of the day, so that Moro used to talk of the monthly rose in the garden, and the daily rose in the house, which she declared to be the very poorest joke that she had ever heard.

"Caterina," said Moro, as he entered the verandah, "why is the table laid out here on a festive occasion? why not in the great saloon, which is one of the noblest in Cairo, and contains the portraits of our ancestors? this is the

last dinner we may give for some time to come. Do you know," continued he, "the object of the entertainment I am giving?"

"No, indeed," said Madame Moro, "but if the object be to give a world of trouble to all the house, your end is accomplished."

"Silence, you foolish woman. I have on foot a project of marrying my niece to my wealthy compatriot Muranesi, who has arrived at the years of discretion."

"Discretion, indeed," said Madame Moro, with some caustic glee, "he might be her father, if not her grandfather, and I know nobody who has more need of a husband, for she does nothing but mope and read books. I am sure that her love affair in Syria came of nothing but reading. If I had my will, I should burn all poetry and romances, which tell of women wandering through the woods, with their mailed knights, and without servants and guardians, leading all sorts of vagabond lives, instead of staying at home, and learning how to pickle, to preserve, and to embroider,—or at most to dance the minuet and gavotte at the consular balls. Such

was my education! I could embroider a handkerchief or a slipper with gold thread, make the most delicate honey pastry, dance, and smoke a chibouque, but never read a book, or indulge in any other unfeminine exercise."

"Well, but," said Moro, "why not have the dinner for once in the large saloon?"

"What!" said Madame Moro, "in the haunted chamber? there! no such thing,—I will never set foot there—some misfortune will come upon us. If you disbelieve in the strange noises and the lights seen at unseasonable hours of the night in that apartment, I believe firmly in them from all I have heard; and I could never have an appetite to eat a morsel, so long as I saw looking down upon me the eyes of that fierce husband that murdered his wife."

"*Ticchiti, tacchiti!* I am ashamed of your folly in speaking thus of a worm-eaten portrait, three hundred years old."

"And," said Madam Moro, "what is the meaning of these cabalistic signs over the door?"

"Cabalistic!" said Moro, "your folly is the extreme of absurdity. Why did you never ask

me that before? let us try and decipher it, and Moro, walking along the arcade to the door in question, looked above the lintel, and read aloud:

"'In the name of the Most Merciful God, this edifice was reared by his servant Kaim Billah-ebn-Haleem, the Circassian, one of the Hasseki Emirs of our Lord and Governor, the Sultan Daher Barkouk, in the year of the flight, 786 (A.D. 1384).'"

"Heretics and schismatics," said Madam Moro; "so now that the table is laid out, I leave you to go and dress."

At the hour of dinner, Moro and his family were waiting to receive the company, Madam Moro more rouged, wrinkled, cross, and talkative than usual. Melusina wore a dress of blue and white Aleppo satin, and by her silence and paleness offered a complete contrast to Madam Moro. Muranesi was the first to arrive, and receive a hearty shake of the hand from Moro, while his wife received him with a smile of welcome, somewhat mingled with the smirk of fun, which the sight of a middle-aged batchelor

"over head and ears" usually creates, which soon changed into a grand gloomy scowl, as Moro gave her a severe look, forbidding her to show any amusement at the cooing of this aged turtle-dove; but this again gave place to amusement as she discovered that the sentimentality of Signor Muranesi took the shape of an analysis of Melusina's opinions on Italian poetry, as he felt that he must avoid all abstruse archæology, and Oriental erudition; the only allusion he made in that way being to the Fatemite caliph Mostanser, who, as he assured her, discovered at the end of a half century's reign, that the only thing worth living for, was the smile of unselfish affection, which was more easily attainable by every subject of the Caliphate than by himself.

"He speaks like a book!" whispered Moro to his wife, for since the conversation of yesterday, Moro looked upon his pedantry and Jacobinism as amiable weaknesses.

"Pooh! so much the worse," said Madam Moro, with a shrug of the shoulders, who had some experience in lovers, but no relish

for one who spoke like a book, and Melusina showed signs of impatience at an harangue, one half of which she did not comprehend. The company forthwith began to arrive, and consisted of several consular mandarins and merchants then at Cairo, and included an English traveller, and a Swiss officer in the service of the Mamelukes.

Dinner was served in the best style of the period, in the arcade; which was paved with marble, and through the openings of the columns of which was seen the extensive garden attached to the house; but the principal curiosity was the centre-piece on the table being a representation of the Church of St. Mark in silver, the domes of which were gilt, and formed altogether a curious specimen of Venetian goldsmith's-work of the beginning of the sixteenth century, and which bore the inscription:

Presented to the
Most Illustrious Lord Otello il Moro,
General in the service of the Signoria of Venice,
By the Confraternity of the Campo St. Anastasia, after his
Baptism in the Catholic and Apostolic Faith,
In the year of our Lord 1504.

Moro's easy manner and superficial knowledge of things in general, made the dinner go on smoothly enough, but, after the circulation of some good old wine, Muranesi's tact, or rather the want of it, led him towards politics, which temptation Moro repeatedly fought shy of; but at length, unable to resist an opportunity of laying his adversary flat, his reply led to a rejoinder, and in a few minutes Muranesi found himself in the midst of a long speech in defence of his principles, the rhetoric of which was as inflated as the puffed paste that stood before him. His intonation, like that of the Le Kain, whom he had nightly admired at Paris, unconsciously rose and fell, so that it was like the *denouement* of a French tragedy, in which somebody recounts the massacre of Liberty by William Pisistratus Pitt.

"Stop, stop!" said Moro. "I forgot to tell you that we have an Englishman in the company, Sir Guffog M'Guffog;" and on this, Muranesi turned round, received a bow and a sardonic grin from the individual in question.

Sir Guffog M'Guffog was returning from

India in one of the experimental sailing vessels sent by the Honourable Company to Egypt at the close of the last century, in order to attempt the reopening of the ancient rout between Europe and India. This Caledonian nabob was six feet three inches high, although awkward and ungainly in person. His French, which was the language used as the medium of discourse in this instance, was picturesquely variegated with Latin, broad Scotch, and a little Persian and Hindostanee; but, instead of long declamations, he dealt his opinions almost exclusively in short, dry sentences, generally prefaced with the word *distinguo*, eked out with knowing looks, accompanying huge pinches of snuff from a silver-mounted mull, somewhat smaller than a small writing-case.

The conversation, without ceasing to be political, remained free from personalities or offensive nationality, and the Venetian democrat never ceased to denounce Mr. Burke as an apostate from the cause of liberty and as a traitor to the human race, and to extol Mr. Fox for having pronounced the French Revo-

lution to be the most glorious event in the history of the world; while Sir Guffog M'Guffog, a doubting and shifting anti-Jacobin, thought that the most signal proof of the solidity of Mr. Burke's judgment, was his prompt recognition of the French principle of revolution, which gets quit of rotten branches by tearing up the trees by the roots, as being uncongenial to the frigid Anglo-Saxon climate, where there is winter, spring, summer and autumn, but neither earthquake, hurricane, nor volcano.

After coffee the company passed to the usual parlour, and amused themselves with cards and music; tables being set out for ombre and tresette, while, at the upper end of the apartment, a harpsichord, somewhat cracked with the heat of Cairo summers, was opened by a Swiss bombardier, an ex-lieutenant in the service of the Pope, who, being turned out of Italy, took refuge in Egypt, where Morad Bey turned his capacity to account in the manufacture of gunpowder. His deep bass voice is remembered to this day by several aged persons, when he used to sing the "Udite tutti

udite" of Cimarosa's "Matrimonio Segreto," then in the height of its popularity, half a generation before Rossini, in his comic operas, had idealized the same fundamental forms, with such curious felicity, joined to such exquisite perception of beauty, as to secure for him, above all other composers of his time, the palm of originality. They used to joke the Bombardier on his serving both the Crescent and the Cross in order to make sure of either one or other of the roads to the other world, which he bore with perfect good humour.

In the course of the evening the Bombardier attempted to explain to Sir Guffog M'Guffog a new invention of his, for blowing up, instantaneously, the strongest fortresses; which had been coldly rejected by the scientific men of Rome; and they deplored together the fate of unappreciated genius, which led Sir Guffog M'Guffog to attempt to make him understand the beauty of the poetry of Robert Burns, intelligence of whose decease had arrived in India shortly before his departure from that country, and the delight in whose poetry was the only

literary relaxation in the life of the wealthy, the practical, and the industrious nabob. He therefore translated several of his favourite poems into that composite language, which he denominated French ; but in truth, if the Bard of Scotland had never been known to posterity but by the French of Sir Guffog, his chance of immortality would have equalled that of this inventor of infernal machines ; for instance, in " The Address to the Deil :"

> " But fare ye weel, auld Nickie Ben, &c.
> I 'm wae to think upon yon den,
> E'en for your sake,"

the knight, after a good deal of hammering and stammering, was helped out with a free translation of the last line in "*même pour vos beaux yeux*," amid so much laughter on the part of the bombardier, that from that time the knight undisguisedly declared his contempt of the project of the infernal machine ; and the Bombardier was deeply offended at his chance of immortality, as an unrequited genius, being no better than that of the author of lines destitute of rhyme and reason.

Sir Guffog M'Guffog retired early, having to start for Europe on the morrow. Anecdotes of him still linger in Egypt and the Land o' Cakes: how he used to begin dinner by emptying the half of the mustard-pot on his plate; how, after India, he complained of the cold of Cairo, and how he mended the matter by settling on the frith of Cromarty, where he acquired the extensive domain of Glen-toddy, and where, in a short time, he was gathered to the land of the leal, — for the minister of the parish having attempted to convert him from the errors of Episcopalian Arminianism, the biliary system of Sir Guffog, which had not been improved by forty years' residence among the simooms and monsoons, was so violently acted on, that with a loud oath, he declared, to the great horror of the Presbyterian divine, that he did not think that the Christianity of Christ had been improved by John Calvin superadding to it a little Mohammedan fatalism, with which he invariably designated the doctrine of predestination. As for the Bombardier, I do not know what ultimately became of him; one thing is

certain, his pay at the time of the French invasion of Egypt was two months in arrear, and he deserted to General Bonaparte, thus making good the adage, "Point d'argent point de Suisse."

"Hark!" said Madam Moro, after Sir Guffog M'Guffog and some of the company had retired, "what sounds are those? one would think they were shots!"

Moro and Melusina then listened in silence, but the sound was not renewed.

"My worthy spouse," said Moro, "is afraid of her own shadow; for instance, she would not allow us to meet in the large saloon of the arcade, which is the finest thing in Cairo, because she imagines it is haunted."

"I am sure I heard the sounds of shots," said Madam Moro, and forthwith left the room.

"Melusina," said Moro, "let us walk into the garden for a moment. I have something to say to you of the utmost importance." And giving his niece his arm, they descended the steps that led from the arcade into a dark walk

of the garden, thickly overshadowed with vines, at the end of which was a rustic seat, on which they sat down.

"My dear niece," said Moro, "I have at length made up my mind to communicate to you a project that I have formed for your happiness and establishment in life. I regret that political and commercial changes have materially affected my own fortunes, and, although childless, can hold out no prospect of your being the better of my removal from this sphere. It is therefore my duty to procure you a partner for life, in a position to assure you a competent share of the good things of this world. We have found such a person in Signor Muranesi, who is ready to lay his heart at your feet, and to procure you an honourable position for life. So, as this marriage has the approbation of your friends, I see no obstacle to its immediately taking place."

"Then my own disinclination is nothing in your eyes?" said Melusina.

"So you fly in the face of your natural guardian," said Moro, with angry severity, as

his mind reverted to the bill of exchange which he had just cashed, and was about to give way to an expression of anger, when the sound of shots was distinctly renewed and prolonged, and the voice of Madame Moro was heard calling for him all over the garden.

"*Che castigo!*" said Moro, impatiently, as he heard the interruption. "To be brief, niece, come what may, I am resolved and determined on this match, and I give you until to-morrow to fix the day."

Moro then rose and returned to the house, the shots increasing in frequency. Melusina was so overcome with this intelligence, that she sat down on the divan of the parlour almost unconscious; until she was roused by a pressing message from Fatimeh to go and see her, as a thrilling crisis had arrived in her affairs.

CHAPTER XX.

TERMINER SANS OYER.

We must now proceed to the divan of Ibrahim Bey, in order to be present at the examination of Nasif Bey, with a view to extract from him a confession of his accomplices; long-winded indictments, and commissions of oyer and terminer being considered not sufficiently summary in Oriental justice. Two red wax candles, a couple of inches in diameter, placed in brass candlesticks a couple of feet high, stood on the thick green Smyrna carpet, barely giving a sufficient light to enable a stranger to see the four walls of the room, and around, on the divan, sat the members of the Board of Beys, that controlled, in an absolute manner, the actions of the Pasha sent by the Porte, and to

get quit of whom, and restore the power seized by the Emperor Selim from the last of the Mameluke sultans, was the incessant study of the divan of Constantinople ; and besides these personages, there were secretaries and kiahyas, while a crowd of the Mamelukes of Morad Bey and Ibrahim Bey stood in the dim obscurity of the bottom of the room.

Osman Effendi, excellent and shrewd man of business, unscrupulous partizan, and little burthened with anything in the shape of a conscience, which might interfere either with his well-tried attachment to the interests of Ibrahim Bey, or whatever small pickings might occur for his own private wallet, conversed in a low tone with Eyoub Bey, on the events of the day.

" But how happens it that you are all so much inclined to let off the Emir Yahia so easily ? "

" Because," said Osman, " he is a poor creature of an ancient family, but unequal to his position. It is true that he has compromised himself ; but our proposed leniency shows

that we know that the blow came from Constantinople, and that this poor creature from Mecca was below our resentment."

"And how," said Eyoub Bey, "could the Mecca people, and the Shereef, think of sending so incapable a man?"

"He bears the name of Yahia, and these people are as proud of their names and families, as a Bedouin about the pedigree of his mares," said Osman.

"Has the house of Nasif Bey been searched?"

"It has," said Osman Effendi; "but no papers have been found which could throw any light on the business."

"I dare say," said the aged Swain, "that his wives were dreadfully alarmed."

"That you may be sure of," said Osman.

"Pray tell me all about it," said Eyoub Bey, who was full of curiosity on all such points.

"The first wife was occupied all the morning with noticing the preparations for attacking the gate, and the assembly of armed men; but, no sooner did she hear what had befallen her

master, than the first thing she thought of was to hide her jewels; but the younger one fell down in a swoon, and when recovered, went about, wringing her hands and tearing her hair. At last, she all at once, as the old eunuch told the Waly's man, dried up her tears, and sent for the daughter of Moro the Venetian, and then she resolved to remain with Nasif Bey until she knew his fate, but this has been refused until after the Divan, when she will be allowed to have an interview with him."

"And what of the Pasha, is he under arrest?" said Eyoub Bey.

"Ibrahim, and Morad Bey," said Osman Effendi, "do not intend to proceed against him, either here or at Constantinople, as he has found it convenient to reveal all the villany of Nasif Bey, and we will see whether Nasif returns him the compliment. It seems that Nasif offered to make him master of the castle, and the Pasha now gives up the Bey and the Dervish, on condition of no proceeding being taken against himself. Morad Bey is far more anxious to triumph over the failure of the

plot of the Porte, than to hurt his agent the Pasha."

"And is the Dervish by the heels?" said Eyoub Bey.

"He was not supposed to be in the affair; and, although a prime mover in the business, kept his share in the matter so quiet, that, after Yahia and Nasif were marched off to prison, he slipped out of the way, and has not been seen since; but the Waly has all his men out after him, and he cannot escape."

Ibrahim Bey and Morad Bey having come, their farther conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Nasif Bey without his sword, and holding a rosary of amber beads in his fingers, which he passed backwards and forwards mechanically, his countenance being calm, and his manner characterized by easy imperturbable assurance, while Sheikh Said followed him with the assumption of a downcast look.

Silence now ensued, as Ibrahim Bey, laying down his pipe, opened the proceedings.

"Whoever," said he, "has lived for some

time in Egypt, must be well aware of the position our government has occupied. This noble country, long a prey to the exactions and disorders of Ali Bey, and his successor Mohammed, has at length a firm and a stable government, thanks to the good intelligence that reigns between Morad Bey and myself. We have been as just and faithful stewards to the Sultan (may God increase his glory!) as we have been tender and compassionate to the Fellah, and the lowest of creatures (Asfal-el-Alemeen); the tribute has been faithfully remitted to Constantinople. The servants of the Sultan have been held in due honour,—the just and well-merited privileges of the Beys have been upheld,—and if evil advisers of the Porte have ever attempted to substitute the influence of the corrupt divan of Constantinople, it has been met by prompt resistance on the part of the Mameluke Beys, who are the true and faithful servants, and devoted subjects of the Sultan, the vicegerent of God on earth, in its length, and in its breadth,—and so long as a good understanding exists between

myself and Morad Bey, we shall know how to protect the interests of the Sultan, and his glory and radiance, and the interests of the Mameluke Beys, and of all the dwellers in Egypt, against the treacherous plots and corruptions of the evil advisers in Constantinople, as well as against all and sundry persons whom they may directly or indirectly employ in this country to foment a misunderstanding between the Sultan, who is the true Caliph, and his faithful and loving Mameluke Beys. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the events of this day. Vile machinations have been for some time in train to massacre the Mameluke Beys, but the pit which was dug for us has been the receptacle of others. By the confessions of the Emir Yahia, who was implicated in this affair, the guilty parties are Nasif Bey and Sheikh Said. I therefore demand that Sheikh Said be first put in accusation. He has all along frequented the Emir Yahia, while living at the house of Nasif Bey, and has attempted to corrupt several persons connected with this divan, but without success."

"Do you," said Ibrahim Bey to Sheikh Said, "confess the part you have taken in this transaction?"

"I will confess nothing; I will betray no one, and compromise no one," said Sheikh Said, with an attempt at a proud bearing, while Nasif Bey looked at him.

"Do you," said Ibrahim Bey to Nasif Bey, "acknowledge that to be the hand-writing of the Emir Yahia?"

"It looks like it," said Nasif Bey.

"Then read it," said Ibrahim Bey to Osman Effendi, who read the paper in question, signed by the Emir Yahia, stating that he had been incited to take the part he did by Sheikh Said.

Sheikh Said attempted to look confounded, and then said, with some show of energy, that Yahia was a traitor and an impostor.

Nasif Bey now became pensive, and asked himself whether Yahia had been really the traitor that had betrayed them, but his judgment at once acquitted him. He is a simple, unskilful man, thought he to himself; it surely

could not have been the Pasha?—nor yet the Dervish?—nor yet the Arnaout Aga? His own wife's jealousy and curiosity, and her relationship with the Sheikh Said's wife, as a medium of communication to the government, did not occur to him, as neither of his wives was in the secret; but he rejected the idea of Sheikh Said being an object of hostility to Morad and Ibrahim Bey, and he broke out abruptly,—

"This is all a sham. You, Sheikh Said, are leagued with Morad and Ibrahim Bey. You never have had anything to do with the Emir Yahia, except to rob and cheat him; nor have I had any relation with you at all. What has happened, has happened. I had wrongs to complain of, in the way of studied neglect on the part of Morad and Ibrahim Bey. I was willing to seize supreme power; I risked my head for it. Let it fall."

Sheikh Said feigned to be in a violent rage, and Osman Effendi whispered Ibrahim Bey, recommending him to ask about the share the Pasha had in the business, in order to pay off

to that dignitary the debt due to him, in having at once given up Nasif Bey.

"Have any of the ill-advised servants and evil counsellors of the Porte tampered with you?" said Ibrahim Bey to Nasif.

Nasif thought for a moment, and, on a sort of principle, corresponding to honour among thieves, said decidedly,

"I am willing to answer with my life for what has happened. I have had no counsellors; and now that I am in your power, you will not let me live; so the sooner you take my life the better."

Ibrahim Bey now laid down his pipe, as if about to commence one of his prosy harangues, but Morad Bey, in his decided blunt way, said,

"This greatly simplifies the matter. So audacious and blood-thirsty an attempt on your lives, merited instantaneous death, and we have only delayed, in the expectation of eliciting some further information as to the origin and authors of this detestable attempt. This expectation has proved vain, and nothing remains but to allow the just vengeance of the Divan of the

Beys to take its course. Effendiler, I see no use in taking up further time in the matter."

"Morad Bey has spoken to the point," said Ibrahim. "With regard to Sheikh Said, his case demands a further consideration, and I think that he may be remanded."

Nasif rapidly passed the yellow amber beads through his hands, and turned hastily to Sheikh Said, with a look of ill-disguised contempt, and then asked Morad Bey when he would receive his doom.

"Now," said Morad Bey, quite coolly.

"I wish a few hours to see my family and settle my affairs," said Nasif.

"We have nothing to say against that," said Morad; "it would have been well if you had attended to your own affairs, and had thought more of the interests of your family."

Nasif Bey was therefore removed back to confinement, and the Divan broke up.

CHAPTER XXI.

MORE OF BUSINESS THAN LOVE-MAKING.

Events were now rapidly crowding in the life of Khaled; the raw mountaineer had been, if not improved, at least somewhat sharpened, by the town. The gloom that had overhung him, when under the influence of Abd-el-Aziz, had dispersed, and his natural tranquillity, bordering at times on cheerfulness, but never rising to vivacity, had returned, for the airy breezy woods of Rodah, were not more different from the dark and damp Khalidge, than the frank turbulence of camp life from the obscure tortuous paths and noxious oppressive moral atmosphere, in which the Old Man of the Mountain lived, and it was, therefore, with no small disgust and alarm that Khaled found himself

once more as a follower of Ahmed Aga, within the toils of the Demon of Intrigue and Perfidy.

On the morning of the dinner, he accompanied Ahmed Aga, with several of his best men, to the palace of Nasif Bey, which they found in all the bustle of preparation for the business of the day. Ahmed Aga had not broached any of his plans to Khaled, up to this time, but no sooner were they within the court-yard of Nasif Bey, and surrounded by his men, than taking aside Khaled, Ahmed said to him,

"There is nothing now to hinder you from becoming a great man; wealth and power lie open to your energies,—What say you, Khaled?"

"I am still young," said Khaled, doubtfully and inquiringly, "and I suspect that the eminence to which you allude is still far distant."

"Not so far," said Ahmed; "if you have the nerve to deal a stroke that will daunt all but the stoutest heart, in a few hours you may be Khaled Aga. You know that the course of affairs in Egypt is not what they should be, —that a large portion of our bravest men, tired

of the exactions of Morad and Ibrahim, seek a change for the better. The hour for this has at length arrived—all is propitious—the plans are laid, and the measures are taken—I have proved your courage on various occasions.—Are you willing to take a part in to-day's business?"

"You are my officer," said Khaled, "and you have only to tell me what is to be done."

On this, Ahmed Aga related their intention to attack Morad and Ibrahim during the feast, and was proceeding to give Khaled instructions, as to the particular part of the business,—but Khaled recoiled with horror, and said promptly,

"This is more than what I bargained for. In the open field, and with an open enemy, I will follow wherever you lead; but join in treachery of this sort—never."

"You wont then?" said Ahmed Aga; "well, I must make sure of your not being a tell-tale. —Disarm this man," said he, to an Arnaout standing near.

"You mistake me," said Khaled; "I will neither assist you, nor betray you."

"And I," said Ahmed Aga, "will neither

trust you nor mistrust you—not a hair of your head will be touched—disarm at once, or you have not a minute to live."

On this, Ahmed Aga whispered something to Nasif Bey, then about to mount his charger, who forthwith looked awake and surprised at the intelligence—and Khaled was immediately consigned to the lock-up-room of the palace: for the great Beys exercised at that time, independently of the civil power, a sort of feudal jurisdiction over their adherents, in a summary and irregular manner.

Khaled was well aware that his life was not in danger, but he was full of anxiety, for his confinement was all but solitary, his only companion being a Mameluke, who maintained a dead silence, and neither asked for what reason Khaled was put in, nor would tell, for what he himself was incarcerated; and what increased his alarm was, that after sunset the prison was lighted up with the glare of cressets, which gleamed on the walls through the window-bars, where loud noises and shouting of voices were heard renewed at intervals during several

hours, distinctly mingled with the groans of the wounded or dying persons.

At length the bolts were withdrawn, and the Waly, or chief of police of Cairo, entered, and examined the locality. He then questioned Khaled minutely, as to the motive of his having been put in, and Khaled's answers being satisfactory, the Waly said he might go, and immediately quitting the prison, returned to the court-yard, in which the blaze of cressets showed two dead bodies, which looked ghastly in the flickering light. Averting his eyes, he attempted to go out, but found the gate barred and guarded, the person in charge declaring he had strict orders to allow no one to pass, he therefore took, in spite of himself, another turn through the court-yard, to see the Waly, and in the course of a few minutes learned from various persons, as well as from the evidence of his senses, what had been the events of the day, and what the misadventures of Nasif Bey and the Emir Yahia. At the door of the hareem he perceived, with a feeling of agitated pleasure, the same ass and groom which he had recog-

nized on a former occasion as being that of Melusina; he forthwith forgot the Waly and his own liberty,—and, transfixed to the spot, reproached himself for lack of activity and ingenuity in prosecuting his suit; surmising that, according to Frank ideas, no lady was easily won by the laggard in love.

It may be remembered by the reader, that at the marriage party of Sheikh Said's son, Khaled had been informed by Sheikh Hamood of the approaching marriage of Melusina with a wealthy Frank, and it may well be believed, that this threw him into much perturbation, and he began to surmise, either that Melusina was about to be married against her will, or, that absence from him, and the presence of some suitor more fitted by social position to render her happy, had prevailed with her better judgment in effecting a change in her feelings towards him. He had waited impatiently and in vain for some opportunity of getting access to her, through his relations with the friend and confidant of Nasif Bey, and therefore had on several occasions a *reconnaissance* in the neigh-

bourhood of the Mousky, and was not long in discovering the plantation that adjoined the garden at the back of Moro's house, and with which all the smaller gardens, connected with the surrounding houses, communicated. This plantation, although having neither the straight avenues and statues of a French park, nor the lofty and umbrageous oak, and firm ever-green turf of verdant Albion, yet has a pleasing effect on the passenger, who in summer has withstood the reflected heat of the fierce glare of the sun of Cairo on the heated walls of the city; or, in winter, emerges from some of the dark and narrow streets of the neighbourhood, with their chill obscure passages into the chequered sunshine of this pleasure-ground, where the tamarisk, with its fine coral-like foliage, contrasts with the enormous magnificent foliage of the banana.

One day, while he was passing near the door of Moro's garden, it was open, and out came the Greek gardener, with a reed reticule full of weeds, which he took to a corner and threw down; while Khaled was seized with so intense a curiosity, that, looking in at the door, the

gardener on his return, asked him what was his business; to which he answered, that he was a native of the country, not of the town, and therefore an admirer of gardens, on which the man told him with civility, that he was welcome to look about him, but not to advance much beyond the door. Here Khaled lingered, admiring the garden, until the man thought that he had been long enough; for a female form had been no sooner seen indistinctly through the palings at the back of the water-wheel, busied in the act of throwing corn to poultry, than Khaled's heart began to beat, and he at that moment wished himself a fowl, but the gardener seeing his fixed gaze, said, "There is one of the family, I am afraid of reflections, and must beg you to go." Khaled forthwith retired, and the door was shut, but he lingered near the place, and measuring the height of the wall with his eye, had some thoughts of writing her, and asking for an interview in the garden; but on second thoughts he at once felt the danger and impropriety of such an act, and resolved to do nothing until he

had turned the matter over in his mind; but no sooner did he see the ass at the door of Nasif Bey's hareem, than, now or never, was the idea that shot through the mind of Khaled at this moment; so seeing one of the eunuchs of Nasif Bey standing near the hareem door, he told him that he was one of the men of Ahmed Aga Arnaout, and that he wished pressingly to see for a moment the daughter of the Venetian consul, then in the hareem. The eunuch recognized Khaled by face, and said, that he could not deliver such a message, without knowing the business of the inquirer.

"Do I ask you," said Khaled, "to take me into the hareem, or to bring any of the women of Nasif Bey out of it? It is with a Frank woman that I wish to have a few words of conversation, in your presence, if you choose, but seen nor heard by no one else."

The eunuch then departed, and in a few minutes returned, telling him that the female had descended and was within the porch of the hareem.

"The long wished-for hour has at length

arrived," said Khaled, as he passed into the porch, and saw at the door, which led up stairs, the form of Melusina, completely veiled.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" said Melusina, in the obscurity, for the porch was lighted by a single small lamp, and she did not recognize him in the Albanian costume.

"I am Khaled," said he; "do you not know me?"

"Khaled," answered the voice, which he well knew; "not a word of bye-gones," said Melusina, putting her finger to her lips, as she perceived that the eunuch listened to every word, and, turning to him, she said,

"Habib, you will not betray those who are the friends of your master, and whose object is to hinder your mistress Fatimeh from breaking her heart?"

"You offend me," said the eunuch, "by supposing that any one, even at this awful moment, can have his service more at heart than Habib."

"Oh, Melusina, this hour — this hour," said Khaled.

"Hush, Khaled; no love making just now," answered she, in a whisper, unheard by the eunuch, "every minute — every instant is precious. What are you doing here?"

"I entered into the service of Ahmed Aga Arnaout, with the sole hope and prospect of getting some meeting with you. I hear he is killed, but I now meet you."

"Are you willing to assist in a project for the escape of Nasif Bey?" said Melusina.

"How?" said Khaled; "does he not deserve to die by the bowstring, for his treachery to Morad Bey?"

"He does; but his wife, who is an angel and my best friend, does not deserve to die of grief. They are all alike — traitors, and murderers, and if Morad Bey had been killed, he would have merited his doom. They are all alike. Will you assist me in this project?"

"For the sake of yourself and your friend, I will. But I am just come out of prison for refusing to act in that plot."

"Well, I love you all the better for that. Do you now promise to assist me in this project?"

"I do so," said Khaled.

"Well, then, wait here a few minutes and I will make the requisite arrangements with Fatimeh for your being put up in this house for the present." On this she retired, and in a short time the eunuch tapped Khaled on the shoulder, and conducted him to a small apartment on the ground floor leading off the porch: Khaled had remained here but a short time, when the same eunuch again appeared, and warned him, on the part of Fatimeh, with whom Melusina was still in consultation, that the elder eunuch, Furrage, was not in their project, and that if he happened to see him, and to be asked by him, what he was doing there, he was to answer nothing that might indicate his being engaged in the escape of Nasif Bey; "but," said he, "if you do not mind inconvenience, I can put you into a closet at the back of the porch, where you are not likely to be disturbed, and, as you must be hungry, I will bring you something to eat."

On this the young eunuch, Habib, took Khaled into the porch again, and then into a

closet full of mops, brooms, and pails, a tub being turned upside down for Khaled to sit on. In a short time Habib returned empty handed, to avoid observation, but took out of his large trouser pockets bread and cheese, wrapped in a towel, and some candied apricots and oranges, and a small phial of coffee.

Several hours had elapsed, and Khaled, exhausted by the day's agitation, had fallen asleep on his tub, when he was awoke by the entrance of Melusina and the eunuch, to the very great annoyance of the lover, who thought that the only conversation deserving the name was a *tête-à-tête*.

"All is prepared and arranged," said Melusina, "for the attempt to enable Nasif Bey to escape. What we want you to do is, to put on the dress of a groom to accompany Sitt Fatimeh, the wife of Nasif Bey, to the castle, where, poor creature, she is to have her last interview with her husband, unless he can be saved. He will then, after a time, come out disguised as his wife, and then, when the Bey in female form has mounted the ass, you will

go—not back to this house in the Birket-el-Fyl — but straight along the High-street to the Bab-Zueileh. We thought at first that it would be better to take some tortuous road, but as you can only be acquainted with the main thoroughfares of Cairo, and as there are fewer gates to be opened, the great streets give a better chance of arriving at a distance before the escape is discovered, more especially as this night is a festival and the main thoroughfares crowded."

"You are right," said Khaled.

"Do you know the Mousky?" said Melusina.

"Do I not?" said Khaled; "every street of it."

Melusina paused, to take notice of the space she must have occupied in his mind, but reverting again to the project she had taken in hand, she asked him if he knew her uncle's house and the pleasure-ground behind it, and, his answer being perfectly clear, she expressed herself satisfied that if the project was to fail, it was not

from want of his knowledge of the road. So Melusina departed, telling Khaled that she should be ready to take charge of Nasif Bey on his giving three slight knocks at the door of her uncle's garden.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PRISON OF NASIF BEY.

The prison of Nasif Bey was in the dwelling of the Cavass Bashi, of Morad Bey, where he was shown into a room on the second floor, and respectfully treated; the armed Cavasses waiting near the door Nasif had maintained a demeanour of great firmness during the Divan, but the rigid tension of his nervous system was now changed for a relaxation, and he sank down on the divan exhausted, and in a state of stupefaction. His jailer offered him some refreshments, but he requested merely some lemonade, and having drunk it and smoked a pipe, declared himself better.

The Cavass Bashi, who was the jailer in

question, showed much sympathy in a case, which, according to the European standard of political morality, would have excited only abhorrence; and they got into a friendly chat, —the Cavass Bashi, or head of the musqueteers,—telling him that his name was Eysa Agha, and that they had been together at the siege of Jaffa, to which Nasif Bey answered, that it would have been better if he had been killed there. He then feeling slightly hungry, asked for something to eat; on which Eysa Agha requested to know if he fancied anything in particular? and Nasif Bey replied,

"I could fancy an omelet, with plenty of parsley in it; but," added he, "have any of my family been asking for me?" to which Eysa Agha answered, that his second wife had asked permission to see him; but although the jailer was cognizant of the fact of Hanum having packed up her jewels, and expressed no wish to see him, he did not allude to the circumstance.

Supper was soon brought, when Nasif Bey did justice to it, and had scarce concluded,

when Osman Effendi entered, and was received by him with a degree of hauteur, which would have been more befitting if their positions had been reversed. But Osman paid no attention and abruptly told the Cavass Bashi to go to the other end of the room, and sitting down, spoke coolly as follows :—

"I do not come here to add to the reproaches of this day, but I present myself as your friend. One road remains open, Morad and Ibrahim have both a pretty clear knowledge of the origin of this plot, but further light is requisite. You are still in life,—you may no longer aspire to be the rich, powerful, and formidable Nasif Bey, with houses, lands, and Mamelukes,—but life is sweet, and death is bitter,—not the death of the soldier in the field of battle, but the ignominious death of a felon. Speak, Nasif Bey; open your mouth and your heart, and you may count on the clemency of Ibrahim Bey. What share had Hussein Pasha in this business, and how far did he act on instructions from Constantinople?"

"I have had my trial," said Nasif Bey, "and you can do with me what you choose. I do not believe in a word you say. *Kismet*, it is my fate,—you would demean me to act dishonestly to those with whom I am connected, and would not give me my life after all. Tell Ibrahim Bey, that I reveal nothing, and betray no one; my game is played out; let me see my hareem to take farewell, and let me die in peace."

"Take your own counsel then," said Osman, rising, "I will attempt to persuade you no more at present. Your execution is deferred by particular grace for twenty-four hours, to give you time to consider. Were I in your place, I know what I should do—make a full confession, a clean breast, and seek an asylum in some other part of the Ottoman Empire."

It is possible that Nasif might have yielded at the last moment, but hearing his execution was to be deferred, he resolved to wait, while the entrance of his younger wife, veiled, who gave way to a burst of grief, quickened the departure of Osman Effendi, who, as he went out,

said that he should resume the conversation on the morrow.

Fatimeh was now brought forward by a eunuch and a female servant, but when she arrived close to Nasif Bey, who was for the first time affected to tears, she looked round as if under constraint in the presence of so many strange men. Nasif Bey therefore asked if they could not be admitted into a more private chamber, on which the Cavass Bashi took them into an inner room, but was reminded, by one Yusef Aga, that Morad Bey had said that he was not to be left out of sight, as he had many hangers on.

"Ah! but—" said the Cavass, "he meant such fellows as his Mameluke Ali, and not his hareem; besides, there is no danger, for the room has no exit but through this; and if he leaped the window, he would alight among the men at arms in the court below, and would never rise again, as it is a height of forty feet. Let us be humane—he must have things to say to his wife, that he would not like to say before everybody."

On this the men sat down to the remains of the supper, and left the prisoner to the interview with his wife.

"Oh! Nasif Bey, Nasif Bey!" said Fatimeh, as her tears fell; "little did I think, that the moon that rose on the mother would wane on the widow. Oh! woe, woe! The unborn child will never hear the accents of a father's voice. O Nasif Bey! Is this the end of all your schemes of ambition?"

"Alas! it is thus, apple of my eye," said Nasif Bey. "Now that the unknown is known, better would it have been to have lived the life of a merchant in the bazaar, and sold cloth by the cubit, than to have been a Mameluke Bey. With you the days would have flown tranquilly and undisturbed; but it was otherwise written, and I have now no resource, but to die the death of a fearless man."

"Oh! Nasif, Nasif! this seems not making life, but horrid dreaming—so strange, and unlike reality. A momentary gleam of hope comes over me, as if I could awake from

stupor, and find it a mere vision; but, oh no! the reality is too real, and too terrible. Oh, Allah, Allah! Many a sore heart have I had, but never so bitter a day as this. If I threw myself at the foot of Morad Bey, and begged your life from his knees, would he give it?"

"No, no, it is useless," said Nasif Bey.

"Well, even in that case," said Fatimeh, with decision glowing through her tears, "all is not lost. If you can escape from here an asylum has been provided for you—a secure asylum in the Frank quarter, where you may wait until means are found to get you out of Egypt. The man disguised as a groom, who is to conduct you thither is waiting below, and all that is wanted is for us to exchange dresses, and for you to escape. Though you are taller than I am, yet by stooping a little you can easily pass through. Oh Nasif, think of your unborn child; bethink yourself, stir up your inmost brains, rack all your ingenuity and lose not a minute; and as for me, take no heed, I will act as if I were no weak woman, but man in his power, strength, confidence."

Nasif made no answer, but went doubtingly and hesitatingly to the door, and peeping through a crevice, saw the men at supper, and conversing in a low tone, and, with tosses of the head, alluding no doubt to the inmates of the inner chamber. One of the troopers was busy questioning the eunuch about the other wife of Nasif Bey, to which he gave monosyllabic answers, and Nasif turning round found that his wife had already stripped off a veil, scarf, hood, girdle, and upper robe. Carried along by a new impetus, Nasif Bey now used all expedition and rapidly exchanged dresses with his wife. When the transaction was all but completed, but the veil and head dress of Fatimeh not yet put on, and Fatimeh had not yet twisted on the girdle of Nasif, the noise of the approaching steps of the Cavass was followed by his laying the hand on the latch.

"We are lost," said Fatimeh.

"I told you that it was useless," said Nasif.

But the voice of the eunuch was heard, saying, "Stop! my lady may be unveiled; if the time is up, let me give the signal." The

hand was again withdrawn from the latch, when a knock was heard, and Nasif said, "Who is there?"

"I," said the eunuch; "the time is up."

"Yet one instant," said Fatimeh, placing the veil rapidly on Nasif's head, while she rushed to the door, turned her back on it, and giving Nasif the end of his girdle, wheeled it round her own body, and lying down on the ground, buried her face in her hands, as in a torrent of grief. Meanwhile Nasif, now fully veiled, opened the door, and had a few words of consolation addressed to him, to which he was too cautious to give an answer, and following the eunuch, got down stairs. A moment of deep anxiety here followed—the asses had been ordered to another part of the square by one of the Cavasses, and Nasif was left standing alone, with the female servant, until they could be got.

"Beloved mistress, cheer up your heart," said the maid. Here she stopped, and examining the person of her supposed mistress, said, "Na—;" but seizing her hand ere the word

was out, he whispered, "Silence, or you spoil all."

They now started, and at the Roumeyleh, the maid-servant was sent, along with the eunuch, to make the best of their way to the Birket-el-Fyl, as it was not considered advisable that they should be in the secret of the asylum of Nasif Bey, who now, accompanied by the groom, held on for the Bab-Zueileh. Up to this point, the thoroughfare was scanty, and the lights few; but in the Shoe Bazaar, belonging to the Emir Rodouan, Nasif Bey's attention was attracted by the fair countenance of the groom who accompanied him. He felt sure that he had seen him somewhere before, but could not at first recollect; and at length suddenly remembered, that this was the young Syrian who had performed his exercises before him at the khan of the Emir Yezbek, and whom he had that forenoon seen as a follower of Ahmed Aga.

They now entered the crowded bazaar of Moyyd, renowned for its pick-pockets; and the sight of a portal on his right, caused Nasif Bey

to allow an expression to escape him, in his deep bass voice, at which two persons suddenly turned round, and said, "that woman has the voice of a street-porter;" and Khaled gave an anxious look, which was a hint to Nasif Bey to keep his tongue to himself. He had just passed the now called Wekalet-es-Sitt, or "Caravan-serai of the Lady," the wife of Morad Bey being the lady referred to, whose heirs enjoy the rents until this hour. They then passed through the Sieve-maker's Bazaar, and were among the mercers' shops of the Shouaeen, which, as the name denotes, was the bazaar of provisions in the old Cairo of the Fatimite Caliphs, where kebabs were roasted, and lentils and rice sold instead of Manchester goods, as now-a-days. Here a man cried out to Khaled,

"Ha! young man, so you have taken to the trade of groom." This was no other than the bankrupt mercer, whom Sheikh Cassim refused to take out of prison.

"Necessity has no law, Inshallah; I will not be a groom all my life," answered Khaled,

trudging onwards, by no means disposed to stop even for a second.

They now passed onwards, through the Silk Embroiderers' and other bazaars, to the Ashrafeey, where they turned to the left, and passing to the Greek quarter, stopped at the garden-door of Moro, where three knocks being given, the door was opened, and for fear of observation (for it was bright moon-light), Melusina told him to ride in, which he did, followed by Khaled. The door being immediately shut, he dismounted in the dark walk.

"One word before I go," said Khaled, unheard by Nasif Bey. "Is there any cause for a rumour—perhaps an unjust rumour—hem—that there is a marriage about to take place in the Mousky, between a relation of Signor Moro and a wealthy Frank?"

"Time is precious—set your mind at rest—my uncle presses me to fix a day for this marriage; but to-morrow he shall have my flat refusal to marry a man whom I detest."

Nasif Bey grew impatient of this whispering, and Khaled departed, receiving the address of

a Levantine woman in the Copt quarter, through whom he might communicate with her by writing; and then Melusina conducted Nasif Bey along the dark walk and up the steps under the arcade, into the room which her aunt declared to be haunted, and of which, no habitual use was made by the family. It was a fine lofty old apartment, with an inlaid marble floor of various colours, in the midst of which was a spouting fountain and a sunk basin filled with water, which was always kept playing for visitors during the latter part of summer, when the inundation was high. The furniture was partly Oriental and partly Venetian; a divan of crimson cloth with a gold fringe ran along two walls, and on the other side were some chairs of satin damask, a couple of Venetian mirrors, with a large book-case, the cornice of which was supported by caryatide gilt columns, with noses and toes chipped off; while beside it hung a family picture, by Giorgione—a family picture, dim rather from dust than from decay, with the frame cracked in several places from the intense heat of many summers.

"But, really, your apartment is charming," said Nasif,—"this lofty roof, so curiously carved and painted; and then the sight of the garden, with those thick orange trees, must in daytime render it quite delicious. But what have we here, *Faris?* a cavalier and lady fair?"

"Yes," said Melusina, "the picture is by Giorgione, a painter of Venice built on the waters; the cavalier is my ancestor, Cristofalo Otello detto il Moro, and the lady is his wife, Desdemona, my ancestress."

"Who was he?" said Nasif.

"A Moor, who was a general; but you see by his complexion that he was not very dark," said Melusina.

Nasif looked attentively to the picture again, which represented a cavalier, *nel mezzo del cammin*, or half way to three score. His features were slightly bronzed, a few tints darker than that of a Venetian, with a deep scar furrowing his left cheek, from the cut of a sword or the thrust of a lance. A smile played on his countenance, but the conformation of the mouth and brows showed that its settled expression

was not characteristic of a man of pleasing temper, but rather of energetic intellect, who unbent himself while Giorgione limned his features. His dress was of dark crimson velvet, with slashed sleeves, and a cuirass covering his breast denoting his military profession. Above the frame was a coat of arms, a pendant bunch of mulberries, the arms granted him by the Republic, to correspond with his origin as a Moor (*Moro*), in compensation for his distinguished services as lieutenant in the Republic in Cyprus, and Candia, and not to be confounded with the older family of Moro, who date from the twelfth century. In the back ground of the picture was a fleet of galleys on a stormy sea, on the stern of one of which was painted, in faint letters, the initials "G. B."—Georgio Barbarelli, with the date "1 December, 1508." So that it must have been painted at Venice, when Otello was on leave of absence from Cyprus; having, during the previous July, armed the Cyprus galleys, in preparation for the resistance to the fleets of the Porte, with

such vigour and energy as to procure him the thanks of the Signoria.

The lady who sat beside him, with her back turned to the galleys, wore a brilliant green velvet dress, which contrasted agreeably with the crimson of her husband and a dark umber curtain behind, that partly concealed the sea view, and the expression of her countenance seemed to be matter dissolved into celestial softness, sweetness, and radiance, belonging rather to the idealized Roman beauty of Rafaelle, than the blond and blue-eyed North. The hair of the lady was of a bright golden colour, produced by artificial process, but her eyebrows showed that she was naturally of a fair complexion, and, although of a Venetian mother, she was called in Venice, "La Bella Brabantina;" her grandfather having been one of the wealthiest merchants in Bruges, in Flanders, but settled, subsequently, in Venice, where, from his wealth and respectability, he arrived at senatorial honours. But the marriage proved an unhappy one, although the General was very wealthy, having received an

extensive estate in Candia,—in *feudo nobile e gentil*,—from the Levantine jealousy of the Moor; and, for a century afterwards, a tower of his residence, Castel Otello, was called "La Torre di Gelosia," a horrible tradition existing in the family that, shortly after the birth of a son, he strangled her from jealousy. Hence the lines of Giambatista Gnecco:—

Ahi tu Moro perche cosi crudele!
Hai amazzato una casta sposa;
Era non men buona che fedele,
E non men fedel che formosa;
Essa or canta beata nei cieli,
E tu sospiri nella via tenebrosa.
Orrendo sfogo della furia Levantina,
Piangi Vinegia la tua bella Brabantina.

Melusina had struck a light and ascended by a chair to the massive table next the wall, as Nasif thought to show him the picture, about which he cared nothing at such a time, but the frame being pressed, he was astonished to see the cavalier recede from his view, and the canvas pushed back as a door. Melusina entered the wall, and, beckoning him to follow, without any noise, he at once comprehended

this was an ingeniously constructed retreat, and as he entered a closet, and saw provisions, and a change of dress, he said, "Now I begin to believe that my life is secure;" and broke forth in expressions of gratitude—to which Melusina answered,

"It is to your wife, Fatimeh, that gratitude is due, and from this time forth, love truth and justice for her sake, better than you have done hitherto."

"I hear," said the haughty and ambitious soldier and politician, with submission to the Giaour girl, whom, twenty-four hours before, he should have scarcely thought worthy to light his pipe.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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